

Next Generation 23  
Nov 1996

(Continued from  
Part 1)



YOUR MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON...





# StarCraft

The designers of *Warcraft II* are ready to serve up another dose of combat strategy, this time in space



Resource management is as important to success in *StarCraft* as fighting skills or military strategy. Multiplayer games are an exercise in inter-player cooperation, planning, and — of course — betrayal

Format: **PC-CD ROM**

Publisher: **Blizzard**

Developer: **Blizzard**

Release Date: **April '97**

Origin: **U.S.**

**"There are role-playing and puzzle elements, along with missions ranging from rescues to terminations"**

Bill Roper, Senior Producer

**O**ver the last year and a half, Blizzard has gone from being a small, relatively obscure development house to an industry force to be reckoned with. The impact of *Warcraft II* on the gaming world can't be underestimated, and the upcoming *Diablo* is already making waves. So how do you follow up one of the most successful action/strategy titles of the year? Simple: start from square one, and build something new.

Bill Roper, *StarCraft*'s Senior Producer, puts it this way: "Like any gamers, at Blizzard we're always looking for new experiences. If we were content to rest on our laurels, we would have never made the changes we did when we went from *Warcraft: Orcs & Humans* to *Warcraft II*."

Enter *StarCraft*, an action/strategy

title that loosely follows the *Warcraft* design but updates the premise and adds a plethora of new features.

Combat takes place between the forces of the Terrans, a human species, and two alien races, the Protoss and the Zerg. Unlike *Warcraft II*, however, in which no matter what race you played as, all the units were roughly



Not all races are created equal in *StarCraft*. With disparate strengths and weaknesses, it will be possible for players to nurture an individual playing style to a greater extent than was possible in *Warcraft II*

## ng alphas



WarCraft 2, Blizzard's biggest game to date, came in at number 10 in NG 21's Top 100 Games of All Time. StarCraft looks to keep all of the elements that made Warcraft 2, and then some

equivalent, *StarCraft* is taking a different approach. Protoss units, for example, are extremely powerful but take a great deal of time and resources to build, while Terran units are cheap and fast to construct but can't take extensive punishment.

There are other changes as well. The most immediately noticeable of which is the switch to an isometric perspective. "We really wanted to give a much deeper graphical look to the units," Roper explains, "and we're also using wholly rendered artwork for the units and wanted to make sure that every detail can be seen and draw the player in as much as possible. We feel that the isometric view will really help make *StarCraft* stand out."

And so, unlike *WarCraft 2* in which the characters were rendered then extensively touched up for a style more consistent with the fantasy setting, the artwork in *StarCraft* has undergone very little retouching, retaining a rendered, high-tech look.

Another change is in the structure of the game itself. *WarCraft 2* is a game of attrition and conquest, in which opponents fight until one is defeated. *StarCraft* has a much more integrated storyline, and some levels are much more like missions than battles. "In *StarCraft* there are slight role-playing and puzzle elements, along with unique missions ranging



from rescues to assassinations." Many missions, in fact, are loosely patterned on classic scenarios from science fiction films, such as the trench assault from *Star Wars*.

Lastly, along with *Diablo*, *StarCraft* will be one of the first titles available for play on Blizzard's Battle.net, a new online gaming service. "Battle.net will be provided to players at no additional cost," Roper explains. "The player will go into the multiplayer selection menu from within the game and press the Battle.net button. The player will then be taken to our Battle.net service using their own ISP. Players can swap hints, strategies, files, set up guilds and meeting sites, and most importantly, initiate multiplayer games."

So how are matches set-up? Roper explains: "Whenever a player enters Battle.net, they are filtered by location and ping times, and placed with other players close to them in the internet neighborhood. Our goal is to provide an exciting and fun experience with no hassles."

**"Battle.net will be provided at no additional cost. Players can swap hints and strategies, and initiate multiplayer games."**

Bill Roper, Senior Producer



Gone are the knights, elves, and foot soldiers. StarCraft is more high tech than Blizzard's previous offerings







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# Interstate '76

Activision adapts its *MechWarrior II* engine for a different vehicle — and you won't believe (or won't remember) the world it's set in



It's hard to tell what's game and what's cut scene in *Interstate '76*, and that's exactly the way Activision intended it. The cinematic screens use graphics based on the actual game sequences, so continuity remains intact

Format: **PC-CD ROM**  
 Publisher: **Activision**  
 Developer: **Activision**  
 Release Date: **November**  
 Origin: **U.S.**



This is the 1970 as it might have been — not a post-apocalyptic scenario

**I**magine that the '70s never died. Imagine bell bottoms and afros never went out of style. Now imagine the gas crisis of the period never ended either, and all those mod badasses with their sideburns and leisure suits are tearing around the American Southwest, killing each other for the fuel to keep their gas-guzzling

muscle cars running. Base the whole thing on a souped-up *MechWarrior II* game engine and throw in an ice-cool funk soundtrack, and you've got the idea behind *Interstate '76*.

Zack Norman, 176's lead designer, explains, "The idea came from a desire to take the *Mech II* technology to the next level and make a real action-simulation hybrid — a vehicle action simulation — but also infuse it with a style and a soul that hasn't been exploited before."

"We wanted to make a game that could capture a mood in a way that goes beyond just lighting things on fire and blowing them up," Norman continues. "And once we

**"The idea came from a desire to take the *MechWarrior II* technology to the next level"**

*Zack Norman, Lead Designer*

## ng alphas



Of course, a lot of 1970's memorabilia and fashions crop up in the game. Players will need to use the CB regularly to chack in with allies, and if you're really lucky, Taurus (your wing man) will recite some poetry

## Real World

A great deal of thought has gone into keeping *Interstate '76's* world consistent. Vesce says, "We're trying to get away from the shell-mission, shell-mission paradigm that's seen in most sims. What we're doing is using cut scenes and CB radio broadcasts *within* missions to create a more cinematic game — instead of jarring players out of the sim with ugly breaks in the game."

Norman concludes, "We've tried to keep the interactive and non-interactive parts of the game stylistically consistent. You'll notice that the characters have a low polygon count and that the cars used in the cut scenes use exactly the same models as found in the game. We're also experimenting with blending palettes from the cut scenes and the game, so that the average player won't be able to tell the difference and will stay totally immersed."

decided on a vehicle combat game, we looked for the best vehicles to use."

The next piece fell automatically into place. "At the time we were deciding how to do this, I was also trying to decide what to do with my bonus from *MechWarrior II*," Norman reveals, "so naturally I was looking for a car, and I thought, 'Oh yeah! I'll get a '70s muscle car!' So one day I had the *Auto Buys* book on my lap, looking at all these cars while we were trying to decide what kind of vehicles to use in a videogame, and I wasn't really listening and I looked up and said, 'Y'know, I could buy a 1970 Barracuda. That would be a bitchin' car to have,' and suddenly Sean Vesce, *I76's* Director went, 'Whoa!'"

**In the world** of *I76*, the U.S. has been thrown into economic chaos by the prolonged gas crunch. Marauding bands have taken to cruising the American desert in their heavily armed V8s, looting anything that moves and laying siege to anything that doesn't. Authorities have already been stretched to the breaking point, so a new kind of solution emerges: the auto vigilante. They can protect you, and they will come to your aid — but for a price.

Norman continues: "We made it



*Interstate '76's* heroes and villains are classic '70s characters. Groova Champion and Taurus (above) are the two heroes trying to bring down the evil Antonio Maiochio (top), a man trying to blow up U.S. oil fields

clear that we wanted to stay away from the *Road Warrior* cliché and not make the universe a post-apocalyptic one. The metaphor isn't *Road Warrior*. It's a combination of comic book vigilantes and villains meets the Wild West. It's a place where you can walk into a 7-11 and buy both ammunition and a quart of milk."

**As a vigilante**, the player tackles a variety of missions, from escorting other vehicles, to defeating known road criminals, even coming to the aid of a diner under attack. The



Fans of the best-selling *MechWarrior 2* will immediately recognize *176*'s pace and feel. Although the game engine and the pace of action have been tweaked, *176* is very much a chip off of the old Activision block.

overall goal is to bring to justice one Antonio Malochio, who's been hired by OPEC to detonate a nuclear warhead over the U.S.'s one remaining oil field (he also killed your sister, Jade, when she got wind of the plot). So the player's motivation is simple: avenge your sister and save America.

Adapting the *MechWarrior II* engine for automotive combat, however, proved difficult. Vesce explains, "There have been quite a few hurdles. If you look at the *Mech II* engine, it had a long and difficult

history, developed by a large team of programmers over the course of two or three years under the direction of several producers, with a lot of trials and tribulations before it went out the door. As you can imagine, the technology was held together with super glue and bubble gum. So when we got our hands on it, we really had to gut a lot of the systems."

You'll now find a completely new rendering system (which can pump out many more polygons per second) and fully texture-mapped graphics (as opposed to the combination of textures and flat shading featured in *Mech II*). On top of this, the team has added a new system to take care of all the vehicle dynamics such as suspension, flat tires and vehicle skidding.

Vesce continues. "One of the things



Would you cut this guy up at your local freeway intersection? Probably not



Between each mission, cars can be souped up further and damage repaired. It's important to finish each round of combat with as little damage as possible, and with enough cash to reload all your weapons

we're really proud of is that unlike other racing games, we're not track based. Just like *Mech II*, as much as your car can endure off-road driving, you can take it wherever you want, and that opens up new possibilities, such as fighting in the desert."

Norman adds, "In *Mech II* you have a kind of two-dimensional flight combat model, in that you have a speed-determined turn radius, so getting on somebody's tail and waxing them was the order of the day. It's similar in *176*, but vehicles of different weight and maneuverability will benefit from sticking to different terrains and surface types. This adds a new strategy to the game."

**"We wanted to stay away from the Road Warrior cliché and not make the universe post-apocalyptic"**

Zach Norman, Lead Designer

## ng alphas



From inside the car (above) it's possible to shoot bad guys with a hand gun (be sure that you have enough money for a new windshield, however). Your car is one of the hottest on the road — be sure to look after it (left)

## The game includes

some 25 different types of cars, all based on classic '70s-era American cars. To avoid trademark problems they're called by slightly different names — Piranha instead of Barracuda, for example — but the chassis are clearly recognizable. In addition, each car can be customized with any of three different paint jobs per car. Plus, as with *Mech II*, each vehicle has a set number of hard points for mounting weapons. One major difference between *I76* and *Mech II*, however, is in the speed with which certain missions must be accomplished — If you can't reach the

diner in time, for example, it will be gutted by the time you get there.

Another new wrinkle is the way in which enemies act and react. "We implemented a totally new AI," explains Vesce, "and I think you'll find that the enemy vehicles are far superior in their intelligence, in how they react to the player and how they utilize their weapons. So for instance, if a vehicle is damaged on its right side, it will know to keep itself to the left side of the player so it won't take any more damage to its hurt side."

In addition to the story mode, *I76* includes an Auto Melee mode, which is a networked autodeal for up to eight players over either a LAN or direct connect. At present, no 3D accelerator cards are supported — the game engine is now tuned to the team's satisfaction without one, and adding even Direct3D support would put the project behind schedule. Although, as with *MechWarrior II* and its *Pentium* and *NetMech* editions, there should be a hardware accelerated version of the game in the near future.

In world of games glutted with space operas and elf-ridden fantasy worlds, finding a scenario that takes a radically different approach is like finding the proverbial diamond in a mountain of coal.

"Besides," Norman adds, "we all love '70s funk. It's great road-trip music."



Of course, explosions play a large part in the game. As do pit stops at 7-11s



Will the murder of your sister and the plot to destroy the U.S.'s oil reserves be foiled? It will take some fast driving and a steady trigger finger — not to mention a taste for prolonged exposure to 70s funk



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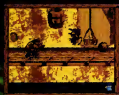
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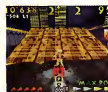
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# Wave Race 64



Check out the reflections and the refraction of light in the water. The real beauty is that it's not just graphical luxury, they're there to help you read the waves' contours and also

**"Wave Race actually uses real wave propagation physics. The jet skis actually lay a wake and that interacts with the jet skis behind."**

Jim Murrick, Nintendo

Format: **Nintendo 64**  
 Publisher: **Nintendo**  
 Developer: **Nintendo**  
 Release Date: **November**  
 Origin: **Japan**

**A**fter collecting all of Mario's stars, there isn't much else for N64 watchers to do but half-heartedly play *Pilotwings* and memorize the holiday release schedule.

Surprisingly, it is *Wave Race* and not *Cruisin' USA* that will be the first racing title to test-drive the N64 processors, and the third blockbuster to hit store shelves.

**Playing Wave** *Race* is similar to playing *Excite Bike* or *Alpine Racer*, in that players compete against the environment as much as against other racers. From a third-person perspective, players negotiate one of eight tracks, including a night track, and an arctic environment (platform game veterans rejoice — there's an ice level!).

With no *Road Rash*-style armorments, "bumping" opponents is the extent of combat. But this doesn't matter — the thrill here is born of out and out racing (which *Wave Race* delivers it by the — excuse the pun —

Water, water everywhere, and not a plumber in sight. Nintendo's new jet ski racer looks to wash away the N64's two-title blues

bucketful) and performing tricks and stunts (you can air it out over ramps with everything from a handstand on the handlebars to a double back flip). All on the most realistic water courses Next Generation has ever seen.

**Anyone who's** played *Mario 64* (and if you haven't, what have you been doing?) will appreciate the Nintendo 64's ability to implement water into a game world. However, *Wave Race* raises the bar to a new level, featuring water that doesn't just look pretty (a la *Crash Bandicoot*) but actually moves, behaves, and affects a player's jet ski in a realistic manner. For example, on one course, the dark and glassy water of a marshy pond beautifully reflects the bordering landscape — and a lack of waves makes for a fast, smooth, race. On another course, set in a more tropical environment, the translucent aqua blue textures enable you to see your submerged jet skier while diving under a dock



A dolphin leaps out the water as you approach. Occasionally, they will swim alongside your ski



A really big wave (top) — so be sure to get ready with a stunt or at the very least, a solid approach. Avoid obstacles (above), or you'll slow down

## ng alphas



The crystal smooth waters of the lake make for a very fast, smooth ride

**"The key to what makes Wave Race look so good is the usage of the N64's alpha blending, or transparency"**

Jim Merrick, Nintendo

— which makes it great for tricks. By far the most thrilling environments, however, are the courses with enormous waves that require split-second timing to negotiate.

"It's actually using real wave propagation physics," explains Jim Merrick, one of Nintendo's Software Engineers. "The Japanese developers really did model the characteristics of the fluid properties of water and wave propagation to make the game as realistic as possible. The jet skis actually lay a wake and that wake will interact

with the jet skis behind it."

Another thing that Wave Race and Super Mario 64 have in common is that both titles manage to be both a great game and a showcase for N64's hardware graphic features. "The key to what makes Wave Race look so good is the usage of the N64's alpha blending—or transparency," explains Merrick. "For example, you can see the fish under the water, but you can still see the reflection of the bird flying overhead. If you're in the still pond track, the alpha blending creates the transparent effect of the water, and environment mapping is used to get the reflection of the shore."

**But the details** don't stop with the water. When a rider falls off the jet ski, there's a different animation depending upon each situation. If the jet ski collides with a solid object head-on, for example, the rider falls



directly off the back, and when climbing back on, their head will shudder just a little bit, as if shaking off the hit. Also, some courses feature well-animated wildlife, like a dolphin that swims alongside the jetski and there is even a flock of Canadian Geese that occasionally swoop across the race track. There's even a subtle moment of lens flare when tight cornering into the sun.

**While jet skis** add a new angle to the racing genre, Wave Race is not unique. Many similar titles are currently in development (see page 197), including one from Sony — Jet Moto, currently in development at Singletrac for the PlayStation.

Direct comparisons of these two products will be inevitable, and — considering the sheer thrills offered by Wave Race — it seems as if Sony has its work cut out to make

Jet Moto even remotely comparable.

ng



Entering the docklands, be sure to make your corners tight and your speed slow



Of course, you don't have to stay on the water surface. You can go above it (left), or below it (right). Split screen two-player mode seems to work fine

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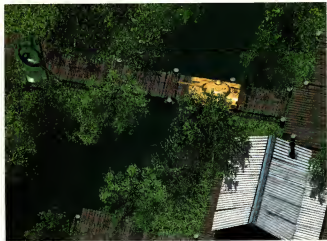


ng alphas

# Army Men



Studio 3DO is back, and what is it up to lately? One word, son: "Plastic"



Format: **PC-CD ROM**  
 Publisher: **Studio 3DO**  
 Developer: **Studio 3DO**  
 Release Date: **April '97**  
 Origin: **U.S.**



**Yup, it's a green plastic tank, rolling through a realistic swamp — *Army Men* is nothing if not gleefully aware of its own absurdity**

**"We realized early on that everyone always likens a game like this to playing with army men anyway"**

Chris Wilson, Producer

**A**s the first of 3DO's "new breed" after the slow-heat death of the 3DO Opera system, *Army Men* shows Trip Hawkins' company moving in a promising new direction. It's a realtime action-strategy wargame, in roughly the same genre as *Command and Conquer* or *Warcraft II*. And like many of 3DO's up-and-coming titles, *Army Men* is a native Win95 application using DirectX. It's high-res, extremely fast, and designed by a team of gaming veterans, including Producer Chris Wilson (*Centurion*, *General Chaos*), Director David Bunch (*Skate or Die*, *Bulls vs Blazers*), and Software Engineers Andrew Burgess (*Starflight*, *S.T.U.N. Runner*) and Nicolette Robinson (*Centurion*, *Killing Time*).

**It's also based** around an interesting and funny twist: "We were debating about how realistic we wanted to make it," explains Producer Chris Wilson, "and we were also worried about how we could reach the

German market since, for this kind of title, Europe will make up about half of our sales, with the bulk of that selling in Germany."

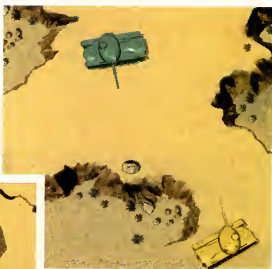
And why is this a problem? Wilson explains: "The Germans are extremely uptight about realistic violence, so *Command and Conquer*, for instance, changed all its units into robots and changed some of the cut scenes. But we didn't want to have to do two versions, and very early on in the design process we'd been planning things out with little plastic army men, so we suddenly realized that this was what everyone always likens a game like this to anyway! So it was just the most natural idea in the world to keep it that way. We'll animate them realistically, but they'll be plastic."

# ng alphas

And so it came to pass that *Army Men* takes place in a strange world divided between the good, green plastic people and the evil, tan plastic people.

**Whenever** a soldier fires, he snaps into a classic plastic army man pose, and when a tank blows up, it flips over to reveal the hollow underside and plastic wheels.

"It's actually a blessing to me that we're doing it this way," says Art Director Keith Bullen, "because 3D modeling packages in general always give you a plastic look anyhow. So



Studio 3DO's proprietary map editing toolset enables the team to quickly and easily create complex level designs. The plan is to keep adding levels until the last minute

when we decided to go with plastic, I just said, 'Great! It makes my job easier!'"

Cut scenes play like old *Movietone* News clips (plastic recruits are shown undergoing training and physicals, while plastic Rosie Riveters work on plastic planes and tanks back home), letterboxed in black and white, with scratches and hair on the film.

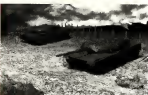
**The game is** played from an isometric perspective, over terrain that varies from desert, to swamp, to Alpine snowscapes. Players directly control one of six types of vehicles, including tanks and helicopters, then deploy seven different kinds of troops with orders to either attack or defend.

"Once you tell them what to do, troops act on their own," explains Andrew Burgess. "They have a pretty sophisticated AI though, so they act intelligently when they go after a target, waiting until they have enough force to attack — they won't rush in on a suicide mission."

With its blend of action and real-time strategy, *Army Men* is gunning for a genre clearly dominated by *C&C* and *Warcraft II*. However, its unique world and light-hearted approach set it in a niche by itself — and it bodes well for Studio 3DO's future.



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*Movietone* News-style cutscenes are one of the game's high points



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Actual IBM screens shown

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# INTERGRAPH



# Crusader:

Origin ports one of its most action-packed PC titles to home consoles. But was the effort worth it?

## No Remorse



The grenade launcher needs to be located and then picked up, but *Crusader* relies on big explosions, so it isn't difficult to find



Enemy troops teleport in to deal with you. You can use the teleport yourself, or simply be a one-man welcoming committee and wait outside

Format: **PlayStation, Saturn**

Publisher: **Origin**

Developer: **Origin/Realtime Associates**

Release Date: **November 23**

Origin: **U.S.**

**C**rusader: No Remorse was a relatively successful action/strategy title for Origin as a PC CD-ROM game late last year. For a PC game, *Crusader* was relatively unique in that it concentrated on fast-paced action from an isometric perspective. Now — as the console arena slowly becomes glutted with similar titles — Origin is porting the game to PlayStation and Saturn.

However, a surfeit of competition doesn't worry Jorg Newman, *Crusader's* producer for both console versions. "The problem I think some of the other games have," Newman explains, "is that they're pretty brainless. I've seen *Project Overkill*

and *Loaded*, for instance, and I think the difference is that *Crusader* requires a lot of strategy; there's even a kind of economic model to the game. Plus there's a lot more variety to the action — lots of ducking behind boxes and rolls, all kinds of other actions besides just shooting."

But, it hasn't been easy bringing the Silencer's one man war against the World Economic Consortium to the consoles. Obviously, PCs and consoles are very different platforms to code for. Newman continues, "The problem is that the PC version was written in C++ and assembly, and was therefore very PC specific — it couldn't be directly ported. Therefore, these console versions are complete rewrites." But

**"Crusader has lots of ducking behind boxes and rolls, all kinds of other actions besides just shooting"**

Jorg Newman, Producer



Security cameras keep the enemy's defense posted, so shoot 'em out

## ng alphas



Computer terminals can be used by the player to deactivate security fields, tune teleports on or off, and generally alter the environment to suit your purpose

that hasn't been the only hurdle. "There are a lot of problems with consoles,"

Newman explains.

"They each have about two Megs of RAM — you're constantly fighting for memory — so we had to scale some things back. The resolution was cut from 640x480 to 320x240, we cut down the colors, and we took out the walking — now he's always running, and he always has his gun out — but we've also added the forward roll from *No Regret*, the PC sequel. But, overall, the core game has been preserved."

**So how are** the console versions better than their PC parent? "We're improving the video because the consoles have better

compression," reveals Newman, "and we've had some additional music written because we can do musical overlays, and we have way better sound in general, than on the PC. There's also a few other nice little graphical tricks we can do: the watch stations you access now zoom in and out when you access them. But due to the limitations of the RAM, we can't do that much extra fancy stuff beyond what was in the game already."

"On the Saturn we can use the second processor to do some calculations in the background, but overall I'd call this a very conservative, very direct port. When we do the sequel, *No Regret*, for the consoles early next year, you'll see a lot more extras, more use of the PlayStation graphics library, and so on, but for right now, we're just trying to get used to the platforms."

## Origin has ported

games to consoles before — notably some excellent 3D0 and PlayStation versions of the *Wing Commander* series. In general however, it's never tried to convert a game that was so like a console title to start with. Does this worry anyone there? "For us this is new territory, yes," Newman concludes, "but it's also very exciting. I think it's the prettiest game I've seen of its kind — and it definitely has the best explosions!"



This door is protected by an electric security field — try greening it. The data at the bottom of the screen keeps track of your weapons, ammunition, inventory item, and health



Man on fire (top). Pick up a shield (middle). Turn off a power grid (above)



The world of Crusader is essentially one big excuse for some enormous explosions. As in Doom, all barrels of ooze simply beg to be blown up





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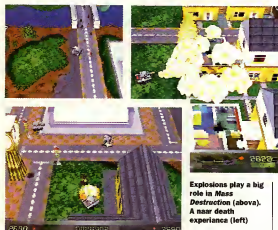
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ng alphas

# Mass Destruction

As one of the new big publishers on the block, BMG looks to rub a winning game from a dusty lamp of a genre



Explosions play a big role in *Mass Destruction* (above). A near death experience (left)



Of course, it's always preferable that the enemy tanks suffer this fate

Format: **PlayStation, Saturn, PC**

Publisher: **BMG**

Developer: **NMS**

Release Date: **April 1997**

Origin: **U.K.**

**"Some people are going to want to leave nothing behind them. But if they do, then the AI is going to ramp up."**

Scott Smith, Product Manager

**C**hoose from one of three tanks that vary in speed and armor, and then, from a fixed overhead viewpoint, maneuver that tank across 24 levels including tundra, desert, city, and cratered battlefields. This is the *Return Fire*-style essence of *Mass Destruction*.

Each level has multiple strategy-based objectives (like rescuing P.O.W.s and destroying radar installations, for example) with some explorative elements such as searching out additional ammo and power-ups hidden inside of buildings. Players can outright obliterate everything in their surroundings, including civilians. But according to Scott Smith, BMG's Product Marketing Manager, such tactics have a cost to pay.

"Some people are going to want to leave nothing behind them," Smith warns, "but if they do, then the AI is going to ramp up so that the enemy fights harder, and Super Troopers are going to appear."

So what the hell's a Super Trooper? "If a Super Trooper touches a fleeing civilian," Smith explains, "he immediately inducts the civilian into the army. So players have a choice: either run over and kill civilians so they can't be converted by Super Troopers, in which case the enemy will fight even harder — or let the civilians escape, knowing that there is then a much greater chance of them returning as converted soldiers to try and attack you."

At the time of going to press, several enemy vehicles (such as boats and helicopters) as well as the sprite-based humans are yet to be implemented into the game. Human characters will also have death animations corresponding to each of the weapons on offer. Nice.

At only 40% complete, and slated to be BMG's second release, NMS has built a solid gameplay foundation with good control and clean, colorful environments. If the AI holds up, and future levels offer diverse play, this will be one game that shakes new life into an old-as-*Combat* genre.



Rolling through battle zones in a wall-armored tank is always great fun



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ng alphas

# Herc's Adventures

Almost lost in the slew of Star Wars-based games is LucasArts' Saturn exclusive



The characters manage to convey humor, menace, and personality — all in 2D

**A**lthough LucasArts is most famous for its Star Wars games, there has been a tradition at the company of creating less flashy — but no less solid — titles, usually published by JVC on the console side (*Big Sky Troopers*, anyone?). *Herc's Adventures* looks to follow in this mode.

While the game probably won't win awards for technical innovation, it looks to be a step forward for the top-down action genre, and is one of a growing number of exclusive Saturn titles (*CrimeWave* and *Mass Destruction*, previewed this issue, are others) that eschew a reliance on 3D, focusing instead on game length and depth of gameplay.

Basically, *Herc's* is a humorous action adventure (à la *Legend of Oasis*), in which players take on the role of one of three characters from Greek mythology: Hercules, Atlanta, or Jason. The goal is to rescue Persephone, the goddess of fertility, from Hades, thus preventing Hades from creating an army of undead warriors (and thus saving Greece). Along the way, players will have to battle (and appease) various gods, demigods, and other mythical creatures, as well as completing some rudimentary puzzle solving.

The game takes good advantage of

Format:	Saturn
Publisher:	LucasArts
Developer:	LucasArts
Release Date:	December
Origin:	U.S.

Saturn's sprite engine, and has exceptionally fluid animation. The art direction is right on as well, with a cartoony — but not kiddie — style that lends itself well to the fairly humorous nature of the game. There are enough gameplay innovations, too, to keep this from being a flat-out repeat of a game you've played before. We particularly like the way, when you die, that you must fight your way out of the underworld to continue.

If Saturn is to succeed as a platform, Sega needs to find a way to differentiate it from PlayStation. With Sony Computer Entertainment America apparently unable to grasp the concept that 3D doesn't automatically equal good game, just as 2D doesn't automatically mean crap, providing Saturn as platform of choice for entertaining 2D game experiences may be the way to capture a dedicated core audience of gamers.

Titles like *Herc's Adventures* — fun, high quality, 2D and Saturn exclusive — are the kind of games Sega needs to encourage more of in the coming months. In the meantime, we expect *Herc's* will keep us busy for some time.

**When you die, you must fight your way out of the underworld to continue**



LucasArts' expertise in graphic adventures makes it the best in the business





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# NBA Live '97



Now camera angles have been added, but it's questionable as to how useful they'll be in the heat of the action

**"With the polygon players, we've really been able to take our accuracy to a new level"**

Tarnie Williams, EA Sports

Format: **PlayStation, Saturn, PC**  
 Publisher: **EA Sports**  
 Developer: **EA Canada**  
 Release Date: **November**  
 Origin: **Canada**

**A**fter last year's closely-contested race with Sony's *NBA Shoot Out*, the phrase "dedicated to our franchises" holds more weight at Electronic Arts now more than ever, as the second edition of PlayStation and first Saturn version of *NBA Live* try to keep pace with the cutting-edge competition.

The most immediately noticeable change from *NBA Live '96* is that '97 breaks from sprite-based to 3D polygonal players. "With the poly players, we've really been able to take our accuracy to a new level," says *NBA Live*'s Associate Producer Tarnie Williams. "Every uniform is going to have the numbers in the right place, depending on the style of jersey, not all just centered on the back. Even the little NBA symbol will go in the right place for each uniform."

The animation is fully motion-captured, and while still early, it appears in no way to interfere with control. EA is also incorporating "motion-blending," a technology which helps ease the jerky starts and stops of motion-captured animation.

In the new world of 32-bit dunkathons, *NBA Live '97* fights to retain its supremacy



As seen in these PlayStation screen shots, the days of hand drawn sprites are long gone

Keeping with tradition, expect full, updated NBA rosters (approximately 350 NBA stars), eight-player capability, in-depth stats, and enhanced create, trade, and draft player features (when a player is created in *Live '97*, the surname appears on the back of his jersey).

More than a decade of NBA game production has led to this year's extremely well-designed front end menus, which incorporate actual NBA player photos. "Last year you were only able to take one team at a time through a season, this year you can take all 29 if you want," Williams says. The final game will also include a much larger amount of audio compared to last year's PlayStation version. Al Murdoch, the stadium announcer for the Vancouver Grizzlies, will provide full stadium-style coverage, and you'll hear the voice of TNT's Ernie Johnson Jr. giving the quarterly summary.

As of this writing, Sony's silence (it has released nothing on *Shoot Out '97*) makes it impossible to forecast an early leader. But as in years past, EA's *NBA Live* is coming out strong with its traditionally solid, true-to-the-sport gameplay.



EA has been king of the sports game for years, can its reign continue?



# TEN THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

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2. Kickers aren't football players. They're kickers.
3. If referees could see everything, instant replay wouldn't be an issue.
4. Don't let your center eat chili or pre-game meals.
5. If you get injured for a game, dress posh for the sidelines.
6. The only thing that can move on offensive linesmen is a defensive linesman.
7. Ahead by one, go for two. Ahead by two, go for one.
8. End zone break-dance moves always make the highlights.
9. AstroTurf is excellent for miniature golf courses.
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# Titanic



One of the most tragic yet fascinating moments in history — The Titanic's maiden voyage. Now you can be there yourself



**D**espite its moniker as "the interactive movie company," CyberFlix's previous products have been anything but. Instead

of basing its games around FMV, president Bill Appleton (responsible for SuperCard and WorldBuilder multimedia/game authoring systems on the Mac), developed DreamFactory, a proprietary development system that enables the creation of highly detailed 3D environments and characters. The drawbacks — you can only move in cardinal directions, and characters, when speaking, look a bit like ventriloquist dummies — are insignificant when compared to the greater control and depth of gameplay on offer compared to the average FMV-based "adventure."

The system worked well in *Dust: A Tale of the Wired West*, and has been refined for *Titanic*. First, players now have more freedom of movement (it is now possible to explore the environment in a full 360°, instead of being restricted to a grid of

CyberFlix takes realism (some cynics might say anal retentiveness) to new levels with its latest graphic adventure

Format: **PC, Mac**  
 Publisher: **GTE Interactive**  
 Developer: **CyberFlix**  
 Release Date: **December**  
 Origin: **U.S.**

movement). Second, the character interaction sequences have been beefed up, with better lip syncing when characters are talking. Finally, the entire player interface has been improved, with a view to sharper, more instinctive control.

The plot of the game places players as a British secret agent, undercover on the Titanic's maiden (and final) voyage. As the game progresses, players will have an opportunity to drastically change the course of history (well, part of it, anyway — the Titanic's date with an iceberg is, unfortunately, pretty much a foregone conclusion).

One of the nice things about DreamFactory is that it enables lots of character interaction. In *Titanic*, there are more than 25 characters to interact with, and there are literally hundreds of possible things to say to

**The 3D models of the ship were created from actual blueprints of the Titanic**



Beautifully rendered environments set the scene for the adventure



Over one million polygons are used to render this staircase. All the scenery and backdrops are recreated using photographs of the original

## ng alphas



As a detective on board *The Titanic*, players get the chance to explore pretty much anywhere they want to as the *Titanic's* adventure unfolds.

them. Also, the character AI is fairly smart, with people remembering what you said to them, and acting in subsequent conversations accordingly.

**Probably the** most impressive aspect of the game, though, is the amount of historical accuracy *CyberFlix* has squeezed into the program. The 3D models of the ship were created from actual blue-prints of the *Titanic*, but it goes far beyond that. Hundreds of photographs were analyzed while building the models of the interior, and an exhaustive amount

of research was conducted to make sure that everything — from the floor tile patterns to the wall paper to the glass ceilings — is an exact duplicate of what was found on the actual ship.

The attention to detail in the game is nothing short of awesome (the initial model for the grand staircase has over a million polygons, for instance). But our favorite example of this attention to historical detail is that in one possible outcome of the game, players end up in London in the 1920s, listening to the radio. The researchers at *CyberFlix* got the BBC playlist for that day, and the songs you hear on the radio are the songs that were actually playing that day. That's hardcore realism, and it underscores just how detailed the game is. Indeed, *CyberFlix* has had a full-time *Titanic* researcher on staff since the inception of the project, and the company's web-site has become a "must-see" for *Titanic* research buffs.

Adventure games, as a genre, have been in decline lately as *Myst*-style copycats and poorly acted, non-interactive FMV boondoggles bore gamers out of their skulls. *Titanic* looks to change that trend, with a highly detailed, realistic game that offers gamers — practically for the first time since *CyberFlix's* last game, *Dust* — a chance to experience truly deep gameplay in a high-resolution graphic adventure. **ng**



Blueprints and photographs of the original ship were used

**The *Titanic's* date with an iceberg is, unfortunately, pretty much a foregone conclusion**



Of course, a computer world as highly detailed as this cannot be explored in 3D "on the fly" (at least, not yet). But in the absence of home computing power up to this task, *CyberFlix's* DreamFactory system is probably as good as it gets. Having evolved further since its use in *Dust: A Tale of the Wired West*, DreamFactory offers real interaction

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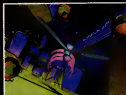
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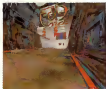
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# POD

The first game to showcase Intel's MMX "game" chip delivers fast racing thrills

Format: **MMX PC**  
 Publisher: **UbiSoft**  
 Developer: **UbiSoft**  
 Release Date: **January 1997**  
 Origin: **France**



The action flies by at a slick 30 frames per second, courtesy of MMX

**T**he race to deliver the first MMX game that fully exploits the capabilities of the new "multimedia" processor from Intel is officially on. The new CPU, designed to enhance multimedia applications, is also being touted as Intel's "games" chip — but this name tag, of course, will only be truly earned in the playing of MMX-based games.

It seemed that Epic MegaGames would be the first to produce a dedicated MMX title with its first-person shoot-'em-up, *Unreal*. But as we head down the home stretch and the January 1997 launch date for MMX grows closer, it seems that French publisher UbiSoft will be the first to cross the finish line with its



futuristic racing game, *POD*.

It's scheduled to first appear inside the box of MMX-powered PCs in January 1997. Then in the spring, it will also be available as a standard Pentium version. Fabrice Valay, product director at UbiSoft Paris explains the relationship between his company and Intel for this project. "We had the same goal, and we have been working together on many aspects of the game and the technology," Valay explains. "Intel have a very good machine and they want to sell it. But to have a very good machine you need to have games. We had a very good game and we want to sell it." Simple.

The power of MMX is being exploited in nearly every aspect of *POD*. The simple instruction multiple data (SIMD) processing power has enabled more sophisticated audio (the sound of the engine in your car alone is composed of 32 separate voices),

The performance and tactics of opponent cars change as each race

**"You must know the car and the track and understand how it all works. If you win, you will not only be a better driver, you will be smarter"**

Fabrice Valay, Product Director



UbiSoft studied all the great race games on both the PC and the consoles. The company hopes that *POD* takes all the best elements from each, to create something new



## ng alphas



One of the best looking PC racing games ever, *POD* will help MMX sales

and the positioning of the sound has also been enhanced. You may not see a car pass you over, but from the sound cues, you'll feel and hear it.

On the screen, players will see high resolution graphics moving at more than 30 fps. The use of shadows and high level of graphic detail immerses you in the game's neo-classical motif. It is without question one of the finest looking games on PC to date.

But while the graphics and the sound are extremely impressive, it's the sheer speed of this game that best demonstrates the power of MMX. Putting the pedal to the medal can thrust you into a wall or barrier before you realize what has happened. Of course, this has as much to do with the game design as it does processing power — but it is perhaps significant to note that this may be the first racing game in which the brake will be used as much as the gas pedal.

**MMX has also** extended the capabilities of this game's AI. "You must know the car and the track and understand how it all works," says Valay. "To win, you must not only be a better driver, you will be smarter." In single player mode, not two races will ever be the same as the characteristics and performances of the rival cars are generated at random. So unlike with other racing games, you'll never have the same *POD* race twice.

To create *POD*, Valay and his team studied many of the landmark racing titles in the history of computer gaming. Since their goal was to create a title that went beyond the existing boundaries of gaming on a PC, many of the games they used as reference points were console titles. "We have been studying every game in the

world; all the production values; all the behavior, like in *Mario Kart* — the way you control the car and the gravity. We also studied *Ridge Racer* very closely for the design of the streets and tracks. We tried to understand everything that makes a great game and figure out what was the best combination for *POD*."

**Unfortunately**, MMX processors cannot combat the latency issues of Internet play. But *POD* will support multiplayer races for up to eight human drivers over a LAN or Internet connection. UbiSoft will be utilizing the power of the WWW to enhance the game on other levels, such as posting new tracks, new cars, and the fastest times of gamers around the world.

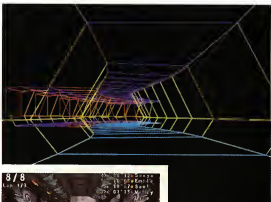
Valay admits that every product that demonstrates a new technology manages to achieve some sort of notoriety and hype — regardless of the product's actual merits. At the same time, he feels that after the initial excitement for the new technology fades, people will realize that this is also a very fine game in and of itself. "POD is only a racing game," says Valay. "But from what I've seen, this is the most amazing racing in terms of speed and behavior. In order to have a mega-hit, you need much more than good technology. You need good gameplay. I hope all this will be true of *POD*, also." **ng**



Are you the best *POD* player ever? Then post your times online

**"We studied Ridge Racer for the design of the streets and tracks. We tried to understand everything that makes a great game"**

Fabrice Valay, Product Director



When analyzing *POD*, it's important to draw a distinction between what UbiSoft's game design and what MMX actually brings. The perception of the cars' "speed," for example, is as much to do with design as processing muscle

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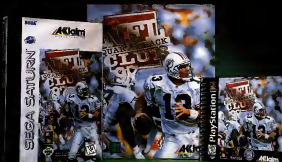


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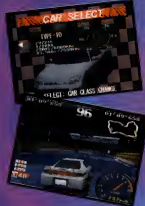
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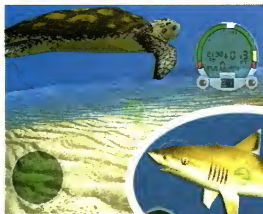
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# Treasures of the Deep



Even up-close, manta-rays and giant sea turtles are extremely well detailed and animated, lending superb believability to the game. At one point, players will come across a giant sperm whale that dwarfs everything in its path

Format: **PlayStation**  
 Publisher: **Virgin**  
 Developer: **Black Ops**  
 Release Date: **Fall '97**  
 Origin: **U.S.**

**"There's an underwater assault rifle used by Navy Seals I never knew existed until we began the research for Treasures' — and now it's in the game"**

John Botti, Black Ops Entertainment

**C**an one game developer, which started on such a wrong note, actually redeem itself with two cutting edge titles in the space of a year? If you're talking about Black Ops, it looks like the answer could be a resounding "yes." Under the leadership of President and veteran coder John Botti, Blacks Ops stumbled with *Agile Warrior* last year, scored big with *Black Dawn* this year, and is now currently working on its third PlayStation title, *Treasures of the Deep* for release in 1997.

At its heart, *Treasures'* follows the established Black Ops formula, but takes another leap forward perhaps equal to the leap taken between *Agile Warrior* and the helicopter shooter *Black Dawn*.

Black Ops' next shooter captures the beauty of the ocean floor and all its accompanying danger — this is no *Aquanaut's Holiday*



The plot is similar to that of the 1970's film *The Deep* (with a chunk of *Thunderball* thrown in for good measure) complete with speargun battles. As an ex-Navy Seal/Marine biologist, players take the role of a character who works as a freelance salvage and search and rescue specialist. From a first or third-person perspective, players pilot one of eight subs, engaging men and sea creatures alike with everything from nets to mines. Primarily, the goal is to collect treasure, (with the secondary pleasure of destroying enemies in the process) but each of the 11 missions have at least one environmental objective, like rescuing a dolphin or a number of giant sea turtles.

"It's a real-time, 3D environment, so you can do anything you want," Botti says, "but there are consequences. If you're on level six, and you say, 'Hey I'm gonna shoot this creature!' first of all, you're gonna be fined by the marine



The majority of the shooting action comes by way of dealing with enemy subs and divers who lurk along the ocean floor

## ng alphas



Collecting treasure yields cash for upgrading equipment (top). Of course, enemy subs often make treasure-hunting difficult (above)

police and lose all your gold points. Second, you release all this blood into the water which starts a shark feeding-frenzy, and you'll get torn apart."

*Treasures* incorporates a realistic undersea atmosphere that the lead programmer worked on solely for three months. "The game uses 16 levels of fogging," Botti says proudly, "and so objects are now coming up out of the distance smoothly." He also notes that underwater lighting has been a challenge. "If a shark or enemy diver swims into the depths the actual light calculation on that diver will be darker. If he swims to the surface it will be

lighter, with more highlights on the top of the object."

While dedicated to graphic realism, the Black Ops team tries to ensure that gameplay comes first. "We research each title heavily," explains Botti. "Jane's Defense Weekly is staple reading at Black Ops. For example, there's an underwater assault rifle used by Navy Seals I never knew existed until we began the research for *Treasures* — and now it's in the game. So we try to root ourselves in realism, but if reality gets

in the way of making a great game, we toss reality right out the window."

**In the way** that *Resident Evil* radiates that constant feeling of impending horror, *Treasures*' gives deep-water paranoia. Yet at the same time, it offers its own brand of exhilaration, a Cousteau-like feeling of discovery, the closest thing comparable to which is the freedom found in *Nights*. Players will be delightfully awed to encounter a massive sperm whale that just gets bigger and looks more realistic as it gets nearer.

Also, the ambient sound effects and music, while still in development, are fairly cohesive with the visuals. Most of the sound is being handled by game-audio prodigy Tommy Tallerico, who used to work with Botti at Virgin. "We can give him direction and pretty much he'll go to town," Botti explains. "In the Mexican caves you might have Spanish guitar, whereas in the North Atlantic you might have orchestral music that's really appropriate."

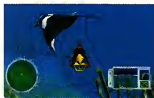
Set to ship in the spring, Virgin has extended Black Ops' development time to optimize the game and add secret areas. According to Botti, Virgin is also looking into a Saturn version, but like *Black Dawn*, the conversion will probably be done externally.

As for other future Black Ops titles, a Navy Seal game is still in the early design stages, but for now, *Treasures of the Deep* has a shot at living up to its name.



There are a total of eight possible vehicles to pilot, varying in speed, armaments, and strength

**The plot is similar to that of the 1970's film *The Deep* (with a little *Thunderball* thrown in for good measure)**



In the over-the-shoulder perspective, it's easier to see the size and scale of the objects around you (above left). Looking up towards the water's surface, you can target enemy boats (left). Shoot the sharks before they bite (right)

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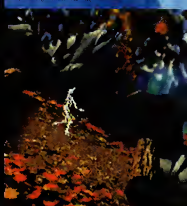


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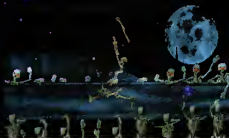
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# Jet Ski Sports



Konami has greatly improved its Wave Shark since its initial showing at last year's ACME (top). Sega's Wave Runner (middle) is the only one of the three in which players sit down to play. Artwork from AquaJet (right)



Format: **Arcade**  
 Publisher: **Multi**  
 Developer: **Multi**  
 Release Date: **Multi**  
 Origin: **Japan**



The outdoor environments in all three titles take place all over the world

**D**espite careening profits for many arcade owners, Japanese manufacturers Namco and Sega have gradually increased their output of high-priced showcase pieces like *Alpine Racer* and *Manx TT*. They seem adamant about bringing arcade-goers game experiences they just can't find at home, regardless of the price tag. Maybe they've got something going, maybe they'll tear the walls of the industry down with them. Nevertheless, they're all hot on the idea of wave simulators, and Konami's *Wave Shark*, Namco's *AquaJet*, and Sega's *Wave Runner* are perfect examples of this trend.

**Although** Sega's and Namco's games will just finish testing by the time this magazine hits the stands, Konami's *Wave Shark* was the first to be publicly tested at the March

With a surge of athletic simulators approaching the arcades, Konami, Sega, and Namco now have a viable new genre in which to compete head-to-head

ACME (American Coin-op Machine Expo), receiving strong praise from players, but scoffed at by rival companies. The stand-up, single-player unit was only 30% complete, but featured an excellent sense of speed, harrowing, sharp turns, jump ramps, and competitive AI. Capturing the thrilling, adrenaline-filled sport of jetskiing in the arcades was a great idea, and it's probable that Konami was watching Namco's huge success with the groundbreaking *Alpine Racer*



## ng alphas



Namco's AquaJet delivers wild jumps and upstream rivers as well as highly anticipated waterfalls

when it created *Wave Shark*.

Much like Namco's skiing sim, which placed gamers on modified skis that swivelled 180° left and right and edged up and down for sharper turns, *Wave Shark* players will stand on top of a full-sized model of a jet ski and look into a 50" screen, leaning in 360° to cut, turn, jump, or bump off opponents. Winning depends on the player's balance, coordination, and physical ability to anticipate and recover from

jumps, waves, and other obstacles. It includes time-based checkpoints, both first-person and over the shoulder views, and is linkable with up to four other units for multiplayer play.

This full-sized jet ski model feels more like mastering a motorcycle or riding a horse, and is yet one more new sign that the company seriously means to compete head-to-head with its dominant rivals. *Wave Shark* felt like nothing else before it — until Sega and Namco entered the picture — but its weakest feature is, unfortunately, Namco's and Sega's strongest attribute: graphics. Compared to the other two, *Wave Shark* looks less than stunning, with often blocky backgrounds, a less polished oceanic look, and visually reminds one of the choppy look of the original *Doom*.

In contrast, *AquaJet* and *WaveRunner* are stunning displays of advanced coastlines and oceans, with waves swelling out from multiple sources, smooth polygonal, texture-mapped surfaces, and many obstacles.

**Namco's AquaJet** is a stand-up sim like *Wave Shark*, featuring a column in the front with two handle bars and an accelerator on the right side, steered by shifting one's weight and balance. Players really need to lean and balance to compete, a skill severely tested by the game's course design. Of the two courses, the extended, advanced route is a wild, multi-level experience with several good-sized waterfalls and platforms to jump off, and river-like canals that rise to higher elevations in which the riders often submerge the nose of their crafts, with full kick-outs, notable torque, and the high-pitched whine of a real jet ski. Its only drawback is that

unlike Konami's and Sega's titles, *AquaJet* has no multiplayer capability.

Sega's *Wave Runner*, like *Wave Shark*, is multiplayer, linkable with up to four units, and its steering mechanism is by far the easiest (though not the best) to control, plus it's the only sitdown unit. The handlebars actually swivel from right to left, which lessens dependence on balance and coordination. Throwing one's weight around is an important part of the feel of piloting a jet ski, and is necessary in only a few of the advanced course's sharpest turns (about 5%-10% of the game). Sega's two courses are brilliant looking, and highly experiential, with rows of jumps, obstacles, and even an island to race around, but the jury's still out on whether the game is that much fun to play, or whether it's just a high-tech version of riding a mechanical bull.

**Overall, these** games offer players the ability to feel the experience of jet skis or wave runners for the first time in the arcade. Moreover, they represent the first time since driving or cycle games that the major arcade powers jumped so quickly into a new genre.

But how many small to medium-sized arcade owners will be able to afford even one, much less four linkable water-sport simulators? Especially with linkable games like *Daytona USA* and *Virtual On*, and odd gems like *Prop Cycle* taking up valuable floor space. But there's no doubt about it, physical sport simulators are here, and thanks to the success of *Alpine Racer*, they're here to stay.

ng

**It's probable that Konami was watching Namco's huge success with *Alpine Racer* when it created *Wave Shark***



*Wave Shark* is yet another Konami entree into direct competition with Sega and Namco. Despite its super-fast feel and cool backgrounds, the unit's graphics seem rather blocky compared to the competition



*Wave Runner* differs because players can steer and lean to maneuver

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# Comanche 3

Novalogic's latest attack chopper sim boasts some of the most impressive graphics ever — is it the *Longbow* killer?

Format: **PC-CD ROM**  
 Publisher: **Novalogic**  
 Developer: **Novalogic**  
 Release Date: **December**  
 Origin: **U.S.**



Novalogic's patent (literally) Voxel Space technology enables realistic looking graphics and terrain, and fast gameplay

**"It's more than just a revision. It's an entirely new game from the ground up."**

John Garcia, Novalogic

**W**ith a brand-spanking new, government issued patent on Voxel Space technology in its collective pocket, Novalogic (NG 20) is heading full speed into production on the latest follow-up to its groundbreaking chopper sim, *Comanche*. "It's more than just a new revision," boasts John Garcia, Novalogic's President and CEO, "it's a new game from the ground up."

The increase in PC computing power since the introduction of the original has allowed for even greater realism, and the development of Voxel Space 2.

"The new engine provides much cleaner and smoother 3D terrain rendering than the original. It also supports the incorporation of highly detailed, texture-mapped polygon objects onto the terrain," Garcia says. "Whereas the original *Comanche*

had a resolution of 160x240, *Comanche 3* supports varying resolutions up to 640x480 — an eight-fold increase in resolution."

Other improvements include larger, more detailed terrains, a translucent cloud layer, and missions that take place in the snow, rain, and at night. *Comanche 3* also sets no arbitrary restrictions on how high a pilot can fly — beyond the restrictions imposed by the craft's abilities, of course — and the player's line of sight goes right to the horizon. And, as with all Novalogic titles, the game is fully networkable.

"The U.S. Army flew an actual prototype *Comanche* back in January," Garcia continues, "so, we now have access to much more information on the real helicopter than ever before, and Boeing-Sikorsky have been extremely helpful. We also received feedback from *Comanche* test pilots and incorporated their comments into our flight physics. Even the game's programmer himself has spent time flying a real helicopter."

Gamers can try it out for themselves in December.



**There's nothing quite like a dose of helicopter death to liven up a dull day**



The *Comanche* helicopter is supposedly one of the easiest to fly in real life — which is also good news for players of the game



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I conquered.

- Julius Caesar

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# MechWarrior II



These screenshots are extremely early (note the lack of textures and flat-shaded terrain) but they do show the impressive number of polygons used for each mech

**"We're making the crossover to a console type game, where it's more action-oriented and fast paced."**

Brian Clarke, Project Coordinator

Format: **PlayStation, Saturn**  
 Publisher: **Activision**  
 Developer: **Quantum Factory**  
 Release Date: **December**  
 Origin: **U.S.**

The saga of bringing *MechWarrior II* to the PC is one of the gaming industry's apocryphal tales. Through a series of licensing conflicts and personnel shifts, the game was delayed nearly three years. "We're going to try to get ours out on time," jokes Brian Clarke, Project Coordinator for *MWII*'s PlayStation and Saturn conversions. "We're building them both from the ground up, but there don't seem to be any major problems. The same developer, Quantum Factory, is working simultaneously on both versions, and they're just hitting their stride. The Saturn's textures are looking really nice right now, and the AI is being worked out mostly on the PlayStation. It's looking very good."

These are not, however, straight conversions. The designers are keenly aware of the many differences between PCs and consoles, both technologically, and with respect to

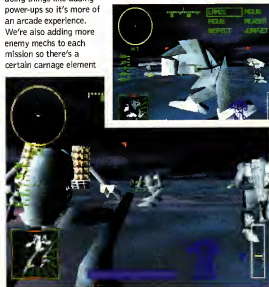
Activision is porting its signature action simulation series to PlayStation and Saturn. But can it survive the transition?

their different audiences. Clarke explains, "For a start, you don't have as many control options on a console game pad. There were so many controllable features available on the original PC version that we had to cut them down, otherwise there would be 300 different keypresses for every option — and that's just not fun. But there's also the fact that the console audience is into a different kind of game, and you have to try to cater to that type of sensibility." So who has this changed the direction of the game?

"Instead of doing a sim game," Clarke continues, "we're making the crossover into a console type game, where it's more action-oriented and fast paced, and also doing things like adding power-ups so it's more of an arcade experience. We're also adding more enemy mechs to each mission so there's a certain carnage element

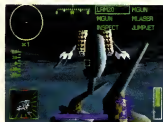


Already the game shows promise. But will console gamers embrace this classic PC hit?



In time, both the Saturn and PlayStation versions will feature Gouraud-shaded mechs and fully texture-mapped landscapes

## ng alphas



Chase 'em down, blow 'em away — eh, life's good

Krazy Ivan, each of which only had six. The PlayStation version is also going to be compatible with Sony's link cable, so two players can compete either head-to-head or cooperate — the only notable feature difference between the two versions.

## Other additions include

real-time light sourcing and fully texture-mapped mechs, along with particle system generation for big, beautiful explosions. It's also worth pointing out that at 320x240 resolution — actually a slightly higher resolution than the original PC version — the game runs at 20fps, without having yet been optimized.

to the whole thing."

Both the PlayStation and Saturn versions offer 12 different mechs to choose from before each mission — within the weight limitations of Clan honor codes, of course.

The overall design concept is to keep the missions short, fast, and action-packed, then just make sure there are a lot of them. To that end there are 32 missions from the original *MWII*, plus at least 12 (and perhaps as many as 16) new missions specifically designed for the console versions. This easily beats the numbers for other console mech games like *Iron Rain* or

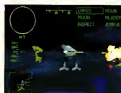


At press time, *MechWarrior II* is approximately 40% complete. The game engine has been finished, and all that remains is to complete work designing the levels and tuning the gameplay.

Out by Christmas? Clarke says bet on it. "I can remember years ago before I was working here, going into Chips 'N Bits and seeing the box for the original *MWII*, and I was like, 'Oh yeah, I gotta get that!' And I waited and waited, and of course years later by the time it came out I was actually working for Activision, so I got one. It was worth the wait too, but we're not going to make console owners wait quite that long."

Nearly all the mechs featured in the PC version are included for consoles

ng



Plenty of missions, a wide variety of mechs, a linkable two-player version (for PlayStation) anyway) and intense, fast-paced action — great stuff

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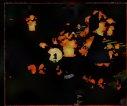
OK, Commander, here's the situation: You're now a member of STRIKE, a covert operation designed to stop wars before they begin. Last month, classified intelligence was sent via an advertisement in the October issue of *Next Generation*. Within this ad you will find information regarding a major international flashpoint: the former Soviet Union.

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2. Name the trilogy that the Soviet Strike creators developed.
3. Which of the following is a real Soviet Strike level?  
A) Wolfman Strike  
B) Frankenstein Strike  
C) Dracula Strike
4. Name two components that provide units with "a clear view of the battlefield"?

Recruitment rules: To enter, you must be a citizen of the United States or Canada and look good in camouflage. Employees of Electronic Arts® and Imagine Publishing may not enter. Those who attempt to enter will be court-martialed. All entries become the property of Next Generation. All taxes are the responsibility of the winner. No cash substitution is allowed. Arts® and Imagine Publishing are the grand prize must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsors are not liable for lost or stolen entries, prize merchandise, or services of independent suppliers. One entry per person. Mass entries, reproductions, sponsor-related parties, and mutilated or illegible entries will be disqualified. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law. Odds depend on the number of entries received. List of titles and available platforms will be chosen by Electronic Arts. In its sole discretion. Winners must be required to sign a Publicity and Affidavit/Eligibility Release. Send your answers on a postcard (they'll never suspect the obvious) and include your name, address, and phone number. No purchase necessary.

Mail to: Soviet Strike Contest, Imagine Publishing, Inc., 150 North Hill Drive Suite 40, Burlingame, CA 94005. Entries must arrive no later than 12/29/96. Winners will be chosen by random drawings by 1/15/97 and notified by mail or phone. ©1996 Electronic Arts and Granite Bay Software. Soviet Strike and EA Sports are trademarks and Electronic Arts is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts. All rights reserved.

(continued from page 68) Defending lawyers would later present Russell, who never filed for a copyright or patent, as having set a precedence for sharing game ideas. Baer, whose employers jealously guarded all of his patents, set precedence for defending intellectual property.

Russell and Baer have become the forgotten fathers of the industry. Steve Russell's game, which only ran on expensive computers, had no practical application. Outrageously priced and poorly advertised, Ralph Baer's game machine might also have gone unnoticed. But in 1972, the year Magnovox finally released the Odyssey 100, a very similar machine was about to change the way America played games.

"I met Nolan [Bushnell] in the late '70s. I was a reporter at the Washington Post, and my recollection is that I met Nolan at a party at Bob Woodward's house. Nolan was his next door neighbor in Washington. Nolan at one point decided, as only Nolan can, that he wanted to run for President. And the way that Nolan's mind works, he decided that if he wanted to be President he'd better buy a house in Washington, D.C."

TOM ZITO

He was the son of a small-town cement contractor who became a citizen of the world. A critic once called him "the smartest man who ever walked the earth," but a close friend describes him as having "the attention span of a Labrador retriever." He is Nolan Bushnell, an electrical engineer and inventor perhaps whose only true invention is a \$16 billion industry.

Nolan Bushnell was born a Mormon in Clearfield, Utah, in 1943. Though he left both Mormonism and Utah behind early in life, he still speaks warmly of both. Bushnell has eight children. The rest of the country would call this a large family. In largely Mormon Clearfield, Utah, they would fit right in.

Bushnell's father died in the summer of 1958, leaving behind several unfinished construction jobs. Whether driven by

youthful bravado or a sense of responsibility, 15-year-old Nolan Bushnell, who already stood over six feet tall, fulfilled the contracts himself. "When you do something like that as a 15-year-old, you begin to believe you can do anything," says Bushnell.

In 1962, Bushnell enrolled in college at the University of Utah. Almost immediately he lost his tuition money in a poker game and, in order to pay his way, took a job running games at Lagoon, an amusement park located north of Salt Lake City. Here, he says, he got his "second education."

"Remember, I started out selling balls to knock milk bottles over. So I'd say 'Come on over.' If I got you to take one of my baseballs and give me a quarter, I was doing my job.

**I always said that I was doing the same thing with Pong, only I was putting myself in the box. The things that I had learned about getting you to spend a quarter on me in one of my games in real life, I put those sales pitches in my automated box."**

NOLAN BUSHNELL



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Eventually he moved to an in-park pinball and electro-mechanical game arcade. There he watched customers play games like *Chicago Speedway*. He helped maintain the machinery and learned how it worked. Most importantly, he further honed his philosophy on how the game business operates. Back at college, he discovered the computer lab. By this time, U of U had emerged as one of the top schools for computer science.

**"In the late '60s if you wanted to connect a computer up to a telephone or to a video screen, you only did it three places in the world or in the known universe — the University of Utah, MIT, or Stanford. And it was just serendipity that I went to school there."**

NOLAN BUSHNELL

Spending more and more time in the lab, Bushnell learned about computer games. His favorite was *Spacewar*, Steve Russell's pioneering two-man combat game. Bushnell played it incessantly. He also created some games of his own. Naturally charismatic, Bushnell talked senior students into helping him. He made computerized tic-tac-toe and 3D tic-tac-toe. His best invention was a game called *Fox and Geese*.

**"Fox and Geese was a very primitive game in which there were, it was either 4 or 6 Xs which represented the geese and one 0 which was the fox. And if the geese completely surrounded the fox, they could kill the fox. But if the fox got any of the geese off by himself, he could kill the geese."**

**So the idea was to have three geese touch the fox at the**

**same time. And they were actually run by the computer. And they just had a very simple algorithm. They looked to see whether the fox was to the left of them or to the right, and they'd click one space toward that side in both the X and Y. So they'd constantly be converging on him.**

**You were driving the fox around trying to go after a goose and isolate it."**

NOLAN BUSHNELL

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Though the students at the University of Utah teamed up to write seven computer games, *Spacewar* remained Bushnell's favorite. He continued his late night *Spacewar* sessions all the way through school. By the time he graduated, in 1968, he had committed the game and its many nuances to memory.

In 1969, a Northern Californian engineering firm called Ampex Corporation hired Bushnell as a research design engineer for \$10,000 a year. As a salaried employee working on a new type of recording device, Bushnell felt stifled. Looking back on his double-track education, he decided to combine engineering and arcade games.

In the strongest entrepreneurial tradition, he turned his daughter's bedroom into a workshop. For the next few months, during evenings and weekends Bushnell worked on a coin-operated version of Steve Russell's computer game, *Spacewar*. His two-year-old daughter, Britta, slept in the living room.

Bushnell originally tried to build his game using a new Texas Instruments minicomputer, but found that it was too expensive and lacked the processing power to run a compelling game. The space ships had no shape, and the game moved too slowly. But rather than abandon his dreams, Bushnell found a way to improvise. Instead of building a computer, a device capable of performing many kinds of tasks, he designed a machine capable of only one thing — playing his game.

**The trick worked.** Though it lacked the crisp graphics Russell had created on the \$120,000 PDP-1, Bushnell's game, *Computer Space*, retained all of the basic play value. It had the star and gravity field, the hyperspace jump, and the same outer space physics.

Once he created the circuit board, Bushnell found other ways to save money. He used a \$75 Zenith black and white television for a monitor, and the coin-drop emptied quarters into a bread pan. Since the coin-operated videogame industry did not exist, and most of the electro-mechanical amusement industry was in distant Chicago, Bushnell had to constantly invent solutions.

Having created a working prototype, Bushnell now looked for a partner to help manufacture it. He found that partner in Bill Nutting, founder of Nutting Associates. Nutting, who had already begun dabbling in the coin-op

business, hired Bushnell and licensed his game.

Because of its complex gameplay, *Computer Space* had pages of instructions explaining how to maneuver the ships, steer clear of gravity, and jump into hyperspace. Nutting installed the first unit at The Dutch Goose, a bar just off the Stanford University campus that Nutting used as a test site. No one in the bar had ever seen such a thing. While *Computer Space* attracted some curious stares, it did not attract many players.

When Nutting hawked the cabinet around trade shows, there was curiosity but no real commercial interest. The concept was too highbrow, the execution too complicated. As Bushnell himself later admitted "It would have earned no money in a working man's bar."

Nutting never sold all of the 1,500 machines it manufactured.

Bushnell knew the most off-putting thing about *Computer Space* was the complex instructions. "Nobody wants to read an encyclopedia to play a game." He also blames Nutting for mis-marketing the game.

"Nutting was literally about to go bankrupt. I mean, they really had some problems. And *Computer Space* did okay, but it really didn't do nearly as well as it could have. Companies that are in trouble... When you get inside them then you figure out why they're in trouble.

**In some ways it was a blessing to have worked for Nutting. It didn't take very long to figure out that I couldn't possibly screw things up more than these guys did. Seeing their mistakes gave me confidence to do better on my own."**

NOLAN BUSHNELL

Bushnell decided to start his own company. He formed a three-way partnership with Ted Dabney, an Ampex engineer he brought with him to Nutting Associates, and Larry Bryan, also from Ampex. Each partner agreed to contribute \$100. Bryan later dropped out of the partnership before contributing.

The first step for creating the new company was to select a name. Looking through a dictionary, Bryan came up with the name "Szygzyg," a word describing the straight-line configuration of three celestial

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bodies — a solar eclipse is the syzygy of the earth, moon, and sun. Unfortunately, when Bushnell applied for the name, the state of California said it was already in use.

Bushnell turned to a word from a Japanese strategy game called "Go." He chose a word that was the rough equivalent of the Chess term "check." He named his company "Atari!"

My kid came home from school one day and said that Nolan Bushnell's daughter told the teacher that her father invented Pong. Well, I told him to go to Nolan's daughter and say **"If your daddy invented Pong, how come he had to ask my daddy to come fix his machine when it broke down?"**

AL ALCON, FORMER "SORT OF" VP OF ENGINEERING,

ATARI CORPORATION

On June 27, 1972, Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney applied to have Atari incorporated. They founded their company with an initial investment of \$500 each. Within ten years, it would grow into a \$2 billion-a-year entertainment giant, making it

the fastest growing company in the history of the United States.

Atari's first office was located in an industrial zone in Santa Clara, a crude 2,000-square-foot space in an inexpensive concrete building made to house start-up companies. These were lean times for the company. It existed on a few small contracts and the limited royalties Bushnell received from Computer Space.

Bally, now a very successful pinball and amusement manufacturer, became one of Atari's first customers, signing a contract for Bushnell to develop new extra-wide pinball tables. Bushnell also continued working on a multiplayer version of Computer Space, which he hoped to sell to his old employers at Nutting Associates.

To create steadier income, Bushnell and Dabney started a pinball route that included a local bar, some coffee shops, and the Student Union building at Stanford University. Because they bought the pinball tables cheaply and had the knowledge to maintain them, the route became a

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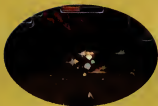
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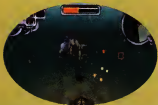


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profitable asset. It eventually became so lucrative, in fact, that when Dabney left the company, he accepted the route as part of his settlement.

**The first full-time employee of Atari Corporation was Cynthia Villanueva, a 17-year-old girl who used to babysit Bushnell's children. She needed a summer job, so Bushnell hired her as a receptionist. He instructed her to "put on the show" — give callers the impression that Atari was an established organization rather than a start-up company with more owners than employees.**

"Nolan didn't want to answer the phone, he wanted to have somebody else answer it. So he hired a secretary, Cynthia. And when someone would call, she would make them wait, put them on hold, and yell **"It's for you Nolan!"** We'd wait a certain amount of time to make it sound like it was a bigger company, you know, it would take longer to go get him."

AL ALCORN

Villanueva's responsibilities did not stop with answering telephones. Because of the company's limited budget, she was called upon to do everything from running errands to wrapping wire around electrical components and placing parts in cabinets. She stayed with Atari for over a decade, remaining long after Bushnell and Dabney left.

Atari's second employee was a young engineer named Al Alcorn whom Ted Dabney first met while working at Ampex. Short and sturdy, Alcorn was once a member of the same all-city high school football team as O.J. Simpson. He was a naturally gifted engineer. When Nolan Bushnell offered him a job working for Atari, Alcorn agreed.

Shortly after hiring Alcorn, Bushnell gave him his first project. He told Alcorn that he had just signed a contract with General Electric to design a home electronic game based on Ping-Pong. The game should be very simple to play — "one ball, two paddles, and a score... Nothing else on the screen."

Bushnell had lied. He had not signed a contract with General Electric or even entered into any kind of discussions with the appliance company. In truth, he wanted to get Alcorn familiar with the process of making games while he designed a more

substantial project. Bushnell had recently sold Bally executives on a concept for an outer space game that combined the true-life physics of Computer Space with a race track.

"I found out later this was simply an exercise that Nolan gave me because it was the simplest game that he could think of. He didn't think it had any play value. He believed that the next winning game was going to be something more complex than Computer Space, not something simpler.

Nolan didn't want to tell me that because it wouldn't motivate me to try hard. He was just going to dispose of it anyway."

AL ALCORN

Initially Alcorn tried to work from the schematic diagrams used in the creation of



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Computer Space and a rough design for a ping-pong game that Bushnell had laid out.

As he worked, however, Alcorn forged his own path, adding enhancements that Bushnell had never envisioned. He replaced the expensive components with much less expensive parts. Bushnell's original vision included paddles that simply batted the ball in the direction it had come from. Feeling that this was inadequate, Alcorn devised a way to add English to the game.

Instead of using solid lines to represent paddles, Alcorn broke the paddles into eight segments. If the ball hit the two center segments of the paddle, it flew straight back at a 180 degree angle. If the ball hit the next segments, it ricocheted off at a shallow angle. Hitting the ball with the outer edges of the paddle would send the ball back at a 45-degree angle.

Alcorn also added ball acceleration. The original game simply buzzed along at the same speed until someone finally missed the ball. Alcorn found the game dull and thought that speeding the ball during extended rallies might lend some excitement. He wrote the game so that after the ball had been hit a certain number of times, it would automatically fly faster.

**Pong played more** like squash than Ping-Pong. Thanks to Alcorn's segmented paddle, it had become a game of angles in which banking shots against walls was an important strategy. Players controlled inch-long white lines that represented racquets, which they used to bat the small white square that represented the ball. The background was black.

The game was streamed through a \$75 Motorola black and white television that Alcorn picked up at a nearby Payless store. He set the television in a four-foot tall wooden cabinet that looked vaguely like a mailbox. Since the final circuits hadn't been made, Alcorn had to hard-wire everything himself. The inside of the cabinet had hundreds of wires soldered into small boards and looked like the back of a telephone operator's switchboard.

It took Alcorn nearly three months to build a working prototype. His finished project surprised Bushnell and Dabney. Instead of giving them an interesting exercise, he had created a fun game that became their flagship product. Bushnell named the game Pong and made a few changes, including a milk jug for collecting quarters and an instruction card that read simply, "Avoid missing ball for high score." To test the game's marketability, Bushnell and

Alcorn installed it in one of the locations along the Atari pinball route.

Once, when feeling particularly generous, Bushnell described Andy Capp's Tavern, the location where Atari first tested Pong, as a "rustic location." It was a shabby bar located in Sunnyvale, a much smaller town in the pre-high technology days of the early 70s. Alcorn, who visited the bar while running the pinball route, remembers it as having four or five pinball tables, a juke box, and a Computer Space machine.

Alcorn and Bushnell installed Pong in the bar in late September 1972.



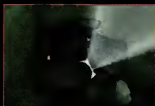
One of the legends of video games is that two days after installing Pong in Andy Capp's Tavern, Alcorn got an angry late night call from Bill Geddes, the manager of the tavern. According to the story, the machine had stopped working, and Geddes wanted it hauled out of his bar.

In truth, Alcorn received the call from Geddes two weeks after installing the machine. It was a friendly call in which the bartender suggested that they fix the machine quickly since it had developed quite a following. Alcorn frequently visited Andy Capp's while making maintenance runs on Atari's pinball route. He and Bushnell had selected the bar as a good test site because Geddes had always been cooperative.

"He said to me, 'Al, this is the weirdest thing. When I opened the bar this morning, there were two-or-three people at the door waiting to get in. They walked in and played that machine. They didn't buy anything. I've never seen anything like this before.'"

AL ALCORN





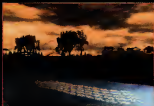
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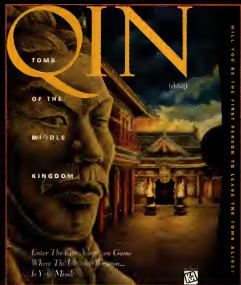
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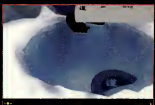
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**"I went to fix the machine, not knowing what to expect. I opened the coin box to give myself a free game and low and behold, this money gushed out. I grabbed handfuls of it, put in my pockets, gave the manager my business card, and said, 'Next time this happens you call me at home right away. I can always fix this one.'"**

AL ALCORN

Surprised by *Pong*'s success, Bushnell decided that he should manufacture the game himself rather than sell it to an established game maker. The problem was, he had discussed the game with executives at Bally and Midway and stirred up some interest. Now he had to find a way to steer them away from *Pong* while keeping the door open for future projects.

In the end, Bushnell played one side against the other.

"Nolan decided he didn't really want Bally to take Pong

because he knew it was too good. So he met with Bally and Midway and decided to tell Bally that the Midway guys didn't want it. And so the Bally guys decided that they didn't want it. Then he told

the Midway guys that the Bally guys didn't want it. He got them convinced that it was no good. Once they heard Bally didn't want it, it didn't take much convincing."

AL ALCORN

There are unanswered questions in the history of video games. One question involves Ralph Baer, the designer of the Magnavox Odyssey, and Nolan Bushnell. It is a question of ownership.

In 1972, while Nutting Associates tried to market *Computer Space* as the beginning of a new generation of arcade games, Magnavox quietly circulated the *Odyssey* television game around the country, taking it to dealers and distributors. Most of these demonstrations took place in private showings, but the new device was also displayed at a few trade shows.

The first show began on May 3, 1972, in Phoenix, Arizona. Three weeks later, the *Odyssey* came to the San Francisco area in a large trade show that was held in the town of Burlingame. It began on May 23 and lasted through the 25th. According to Magnavox, a Nutting Associates employee named Nolan Bushnell attended the show on May 24, four months before the prototype Pong was installed in Andy Capp's Tavern. Depositions taken from Magnavox witnesses claimed that while at the show, Bushnell tested the *Odyssey*.

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## ng special

Some time after Atari began marketing Pong, in 1973, Magnavox took the California start-up to court. Pong, they argued, violated several of Baer's patents. It infringed upon his patents for projecting electronic games on a television screen, and, more importantly, it infringed on his concept of electronic Ping-Pong.

"What they've always alleged was that there was a meeting or a distributor show somewhere in the valley, and I should have, would have, could have been there. So it's one of those pissing matches."

NOLAN BUSHNELL

Atari was up against a stacked deck. First of all, the methodical Ralph Baer considered filing for patents an integral part of the invention process. During his life, Baer was awarded more than 70 patents and was once named "inventor of the year" by the state of New York. He documented everything.

By comparison, Bushnell, with his haphazard style, let the mundane details of invention and legal filing escape him. Even when he created schematics, like the one he had made for *Computer Space*, they were often illegible.

More importantly, whether Bushnell attended the Magnavox show or missed it, there had been a show. Magnavox could prove that they had demonstrated the Odyssey playing "hockey" in Burlingame prior to creation of Pong, or even the incorporation of Atari. Magnavox also had Baer's patents and notes, all of which clearly predated Pong and Computer Space. It also had more lawyers and richer resources than Atari could ever hope to accrue. With costs estimated at \$1.5 million, Atari couldn't afford to fight, let alone lose.

In order for his company to survive, Bushnell sought a settlement. Magnavox offered a very inexpensive proposal enabling Bushnell to continue manufacturing Pong, while paying a license to Magnavox. Bushnell even managed to insert a few special terms in the agreement.

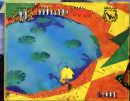
"It was all settled outside, and Nolan and Atari got extremely favorable terms. They paid very little. He got away with a very, very, very small, paid-up license up front. Atari became a licensee

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**under a prepaid arrangement. Atari paid some fixed sum, some ridiculous number like a few hundred grand. I don't remember the details. But he had an extremely advantageous, nonburdensome license from us. And as far as we were concerned, that was the end of our problems with Atari.**

If anybody had had any inkling of what was going to happen to this business at Atari, they would never have gotten those terms."

RALPH BAER

Bushnell played the legal action like a chess game. In exchange for settling, Atari became Magnavox's sole licensee. By this time other companies had begun making similar games. While Atari had paid its licensing fees, future competitors would have to pay stiff royalties to Magnavox. In several later litigations, Magnavox would zealously prosecute all violators.

"I helped negotiate that deal. We

paid so little money, and yet we agreed that **they would go after, as part of the settlement, all our other competitors.** Well, we were the dominant people, and all of a sudden Magnavox said, "We'll help, we'll give you a sweetheart deal, and we'll beat up on everybody else."

NOLAN BUSHNELL

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With the settlement signed, the case never went to court, and the question of who actually invented Pong, and the multibillion dollar business it spawned, was swept under the carpet.

Bushnell and Baer met in Chicago, on the steps of a court house, the day that settlement was sealed. Baer remembered being introduced to Bushnell and shaking hands. They exchanged pleasantries, then went in different directions.

Over the years, Bushnell became a national celebrity as the "father of videogames." In the late '70s, as he prepared to retire, Ralph Baer finally told his story to the press.

"I got tired of being a shrinking lily, and I started tooting my horn a little bit. But it didn't have any financial effect because it was all over by then.

I also didn't open up my mouth, didn't make any loud press for myself, because guys like Nolan were clients. He was a licensee. He put the business on the map. In fact, without him there would never have been any money in the till. I wasn't going to...

**If Nolan wants to say he was the great inventor, then hooray Nolan — you're a nice guy, you made a lot of money for us, say anything you want to."**

RALPH BAER

Years later, Baer would run into Nolan Bushnell and Gene Lipkin, Atari director of marketing, on the floor of CES. According to Baer, Bushnell introduced him as "the father of videogames."



## "THE GREAT VIDEOGAME SWINDLE?"

This feature was based on the first four chapters of the book *Electronic Nation*, written by Next Generation contributor Steven L. Kent. Some of Mr. Kent's work has been edited for the purposes of this feature, but the vast majority of the research and writing is his own. We thank him for providing access to his work, and for those of you interested in reading more of *Electronic Nation*, stay tuned — *Next Generation* will provide details of the book's publication in a later issue.

### ELECTRONIC NATION

Thirty five years have passed since Steve Russell created Spacewar, the first computer game. Twenty five years have passed since Nolan Bushnell attached a coin slot to Russell's game, changed its name to Computer Space, and introduced it as the first videogame. It has also been 25 years since Ralph Baer created what would become the Magnovox Odyssey, the first game console. Frankly, none of these guys are getting any younger. To date, no one has interviewed the pioneers that created the videogame industry and compiled their stories into a single work.

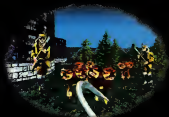
In the early days, before video games became big business, the industry was populated by crazy kids, wild-eyed visionaries, and over-aged hippies. *Electronic Nation* contains the first person accounts of Russell, Baer, Bushnell, and other pioneers of the videogame industry.

STEVEN L. KENT



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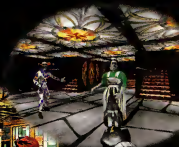




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Join Kermit as Captain Smollett and his Muppets. Visit new lands, discover a treasure trove of puzzles, activities and learning gems.

Windows 3.1/  
Windows 95

\$44.99



Graphics Simulations

## F/A-18 Hornet 2.0

This award-winning simulation utilizes cutting-edge technology resulting in truly fluid, high-speed graphics and the most realistic and thrilling flight sim ever. Each of the 28 scenarios take you deep into a new conflict.

Windows 95

\$54.99

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!

WizardWorks

## GameWizards Interactive Game Guide: Duke Nukem 3D

This interactive game guide provides gamers with the ultimate way to master Duke Nukem 3D. Master games by watching actual segments of the game in full motion video while a host helps along the way.

Windows 95

\$19<sup>99</sup>

WizardWorks

## Absolute Solitaire

This outstanding solitaire package includes plenty of challenging tactical games for the expert plus some easier ones for beginners. And, you can get online instructions for any game at any time!

Windows 95

\$19<sup>99</sup>

StarPlay Productions

## Loony Labyrinth Pinball

Video pinball just got a whole lot more fun! The standard for championship table design and super-real ball movement. This game will keep you challenged. Take a step up and see what real pinball is all about.

Windows 95

\$34<sup>99</sup>

Berkeley Systems

## You Don't Know Jack Sports

The irreverent quiz show party game that is all about Sports. Complete with over 800 questions, all hilarious combinations of classic sports trivia and pop-culture. Complete with all new graphics, animations and sound designed with a sporty twist.

Windows 95

\$34<sup>99</sup>

Eidos Interactive

## Tomb Raider

You'll need all your wits, speed and weapons to survive the onslaught of deadly, tomb-haunting menaces as you explore jungles, ruins, palaces, tombs, pyramids and more!

Windows 95

\$49<sup>99</sup>

LucasArts

## The LucasArts Archives Volume II: The Star Wars Collection

The most incredible adventure in the universe is now the most incredible deal in the universe! This awesome value package contains 5 of the hottest Star Wars CD-ROMs available.

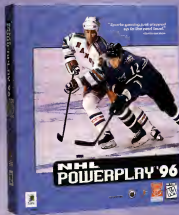
DOS CD-ROM

\$57<sup>99</sup>

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# CDROM Entertainment



Virgin Interactive

## NHL Powerplay '96

The only game where advanced artificial intelligence propels graphically sharp, motion-captured players to strategize and react just like the pros.

Windows 95

**\$44<sup>99</sup>**

Virgin Interactive

## Flight Unlimited

Start in instructional course from the basics through complex aerobatic maneuvers, or race through challenging aerial obstacle courses. Multiple cockpit and external views, and multiple SVGA modes. Fully supports control yokes, joysticks, rudder pedals and VR headsets.

Windows 95

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

Virgin Interactive

Z

You're in charge of a troop of motley, misfit robots. And their idea of basic training is getting drunk, gambling and shooting at pond scum. You've got to grab 'em by the cross hairs and move, move, throw their metal butts over 20 levels on 5 planets. Seize enemy sectors. Capture weapons factories. And take control of the entire solar system.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

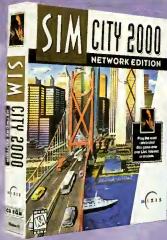
Virgin Interactive

## Command & Conquer: Red Alert

Do you command the Allied Forces? Or side with the Soviets? The future of Western Civilization is in your hands in this adrenaline-pumping, tension-mounting addition to the award-winning Command & Conquer series. No more relying on old strategies and cheats. Advanced artificial intelligence comes at you making each game a whole new challenge.

Windows 95/DOS CD-ROM

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



Maxis

## SimCity 2000 Network Edition

We've expanded the city limits. Compete over your network or the Internet with up to three other players, or go head-to-head via modem with a friend. But remember, you now share control of your city with other commissioners who may not share your civic plans.

Windows 95

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



Coming Soon!

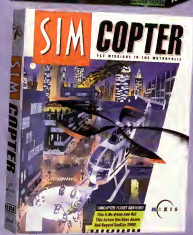
Maxis

## SimGolf

Hit the green from your PC screen! With the revolutionary MouseSwing interface, fast 3-D view, and Internet play, this is the most realistic and comprehensive golf game available.

Windows 95

**\$47<sup>99</sup>**



Maxis

## SimCopter

The wings to soar through SimCity 2000 cities in hyper-realistic 3-D and perform death-defying missions - from medevac rescues to aerial firefighting.

Windows 95

**\$47<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



**Coming Soon!**

### Interplay Jetfighter III

Join the ranks of an elite United Nations strike force which scrambles to hot spots when conflict erupts. Incredibly accurate texture mapping without warping or fringing. Detailed scenery, dynamic weather and transparent clouds, authentic 3-D projected virtual cockpit, and more!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$57.99**

### Interplay Blood & Magic

Real time battle in the Forgotten Realms world. Command a broad range of AD&D characters into epic battles of good and evil. Search out the countryside for a wide range of magical artifacts and powerful, destructive spells. Compete with your friends in intense head-to-head modems and network play!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$54.99**

### Interplay Shattered Steel

The year is 2132. You're an armed mercenary contracted to investigate a mysterious communication breakdown on a nearby planet. Expecting to find a simple pirate raid, you discover instead hostile mechanized aliens that are intent on killing all inhabitants. You'll face over 50 different alien robotic enemies, battle across 2 worlds, or challenge up to 15 other players in all out anarchy.

DOS CD-ROM

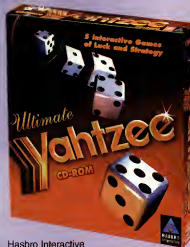
**\$54.99**

### Interplay Normality

Thirty years ago, a thick smog descended on the city. Now, anything remotely fun is stamped out by the Norm Troopers. Play the lead role as Kent, a rebellious slacker. Enjoy quick and fluid movements blended with cinematic 3-D cut sequences.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$49.99**

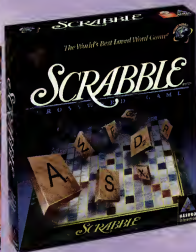


### Hasbro Interactive Yahtzee

America's favorite dice game comes to CD-ROM! Five challenging variations put your luck, skill, and strategy to the ultimate test. The way these virtual dice look, move, and sound, you'll swear you're playing with the real things!

Windows 3.1/Windows 95

**\$32.99**



### Hasbro Interactive Scrabble

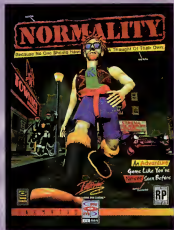
The world's best loved crossword game just got better! Now you can pit your wits one-on-one against the ultimate Scrabble computer champ. Or challenge players at home or over the Internet.

Windows 3.1/Windows 95

**\$44.99**



**EB Exclusive:**  
**FREE**  
**Dragon dice included!**



### Hasbro Interactive Clue

Locate and examine the potential murder weapons, cross-examine suspects and locate the room where the murder took place. Watch the mystery unfold in 3-D rendered graphics and full-motion video!

Windows 3.1/Windows 95

**\$44.99**

# CDROM Entertainment



Obsidian



Obsidian



Rocket Jockey

## Rocket Science Obsidian

A graphic hallucination of fluid dream worlds laced with intriguing mysteries that cry for resolution. You will have to save your partner Max, yourself, and all of mankind, before the nightmares turn into reality.

Windows 95

\$54.99

## Rocket Science Rocket Jockey

Scream along on your rocket cycle in this fast-paced, gladiator sport. If you're good, you'll fire cables to grab walls or pillars and swing yourself around. If you're ruthless, you'll use your cables to grab objects and hurt them as weapons or to brutally dismount and drag the competition.

Windows 95

\$54.99



Rocket Jockey



## Access The Pandora Directive

What really happened at Roswell, New Mexico in 1947? Unravel the conspiracy behind a mysterious package, a serial killer and a government cover-up to discover a terrible secret in the most playable interactive movie to date. Follow any of 3 paths leading to 7 different endings.

DOS CD-ROM

\$49.99



## Access Links LS: Legends in Sports

Tee off with legend Arnold Palmer at Latrobe, or in Hawaii at Kapalua. Features course fly-bys with tips from Annie on how to play each hole. Plus, experience new modes of play, more colors, modem/network play, and realism so true to life that you can watch the divets fly!

DOS CD-ROM

\$49.99

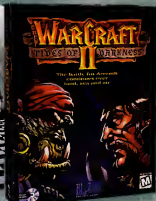


## Discovery Communications Connections

Based on the award-winning work of James Burke, this is the ultimate gaming challenge for the quizzical mind. Travel from one environment to the next, looking for the clues that will explain how you entered this world and how you can escape.

Windows 95/Mac CD-ROM

\$39.99



## Blizzard Entertainment WarCraft II: Tides of Darkness

Continue the quest for domination of Azeroth within six all-new battle scenarios. Play as commander of either the Orc or Human forces. Pit yourself against an artificial intelligence that learns, adapts and responds to your every action.

DOS CD-ROM

\$49.99

# Madden 97



EA  
SPORTS

# Electronic Arts

EA  
SPORTS

## Electronic Arts Madden 97

Immerse yourself into a world of interactive football so real it puts you in the huddle! Create your own NFL superstars or draft a team from over 100 current, all-time, Super Bowl, and secret teams.

DOS CD-ROM

\$54.99

## Electronic Arts NHL 97

Everything a hockey fan could want and more. Features over 600 NHL players with updated rosters, statistics and team logos. Advanced artificial intelligence enhance the logic on both offense and defense making this the most competitive PC sports game available.

DOS CD-ROM

\$54.99

## Electronic Arts U.S. Navy Fighters 97

Experience some of the toughest air combat in modern history as you provide cover for BUFF raids, make precision strikes with the first generation of "smart" weapons, or splash Mig 17's in vicious air-to-air encounters. Features New Vietnam missions.

Windows 95

\$54.99

## Electronic Arts Syndicate Wars

Megacorporations, fanatical religious cults, and sadistic biker gangs battle in the streets for world dominance. Command one of these groups as they fight within living, fully rotational cities.

Windows 95/DOS CD-ROM

\$54.99

## Nova Logic Comanche 3

The flight is simulated. The adventure is real. This all new version of the best-selling helicopter simulation will outfly, outmaneuver and overtake all other helicopter simulations.

DOS CD-ROM

\$54.99

## Electronic Arts Road Rash

The most aggressive motorcycle racing/combustion game ever. Dodge traffic, outrace cops, and thrash pedestrians on your way to winning the Cup and becoming the menace to society your mother always worried about.

DOS CD-ROM

\$49.99

## Nova Logic F-22: Lightning II

Consider the envelope broken! The Air Force's next generation air superiority fighter delivers realism, stunning graphics, multiplayer capabilities and unmatched gameplay.

DOS CD-ROM

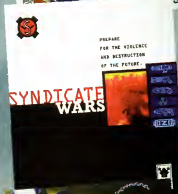
\$54.99

## Electronic Arts Privateer 2: The Darkening

Sophisticated gameplay includes a never-routine mission system in which you take on hundreds of different types of missions. Choose for yourself whether you're in the mood to trade goods, be a scout, bounty hunter, or reconnaissance agent.

DOS CD-ROM

\$59.99



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# CDROM Entertainment

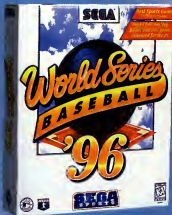


## Sega Virtua Fighter

Experience the real-time 3-D martial arts thriller now available for your PC! All the original fighters including Jackie, Sarah, Pai and all their killer moves are included in this awesome fighting tournament.

Windows 95

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega World Series Baseball '96

This amazing sports title is packed full with updated stats, amazing baseball gameplay, real teams, and real players! Play in the World Series, All Star Game, or practice your swing in the Home Run Derby!

Windows 95

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

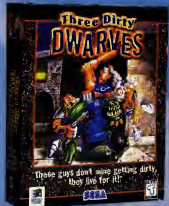


## Sega Sonic Blast

Everyone's favorite Hedgehog is now on the PC! Sonic embarks on an important mission: rescue his friend Amy and retrieve the Time Stones before Robotnik can!

Windows 95

**\$32<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Three Dirty Dwarves

A trio of heroic (and slightly dirty) dwarves land in another world. Their quest: Defeat the evil Orc armies and free the four children who brought the dwarves into this world.

Windows 95

**\$42<sup>99</sup>**



## Interactive Magic Hind

The follow-up to the acclaimed Apache helicopter simulation, now you can fly the Hind head-to-head with Apache! Jump into the cockpit and experience fast action and stunning 3-D effects.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$52<sup>99</sup>**



## Interactive Magic M1A2 Abrams Tank

Using the latest US Army battle tank, the latest in 3-D graphics technology, and the latest in world trouble-spots for a state-of-the-art simulator of modern tank battles.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

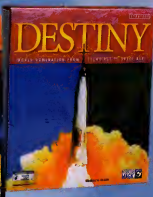


## Interactive Magic Harpoon 97

One of the most sophisticated and realistic contemporary wargames available. Features new displays, updated and added scenarios and a more intuitive approach!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**



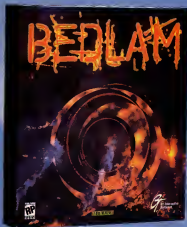
## Interactive Magic Destiny

Make all the decisions that affect your destiny. Play from traditional top down 2-D maps or go into real 3-D worlds to command your forces. You control the development of mankind.

Windows 95

**\$52<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



GT Interactive

**Bedlam**

You control a team of up to 3 biobots as they embark on pre-determined strategic missions to rid mankind of hostile aliens.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

GT Interactive

**Return Fire**

Firepower is key, but strategy is what keeps you alive. Your mission is to disable enemy forces, blow your way into hostile territory and retrieve the flag. But this is no one-sided killfest. Your enemy is in your face trying to do the same thing to you!

Windows 95

**\$42<sup>99</sup>**

**Buy 2  
get 1 FREE!**

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to 1/31/97.  
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for details.



GT Interactive

**XS**

Four players enter an enclosed combat pit in 20 different arenas and let rip with whatever weaponry they have on hand. The last one left standing gets to do battle with another 3 contenders.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$52<sup>99</sup>**

GT Interactive

**Area 51**

All of the action-packed gameplay from the arcade game are translated faithfully into this breakthrough sci-fi adventure shooting game. New special effects and features have been added to the home game, including bizarre "alien vision" mode, in which gamers can play through the eyes of the "Kronn Hunter," which gives the game a wild, infra-red look.

Windows 95

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

GT Interactive

**Amok**

With the best graphics, fastest gameplay and most diverse replayability, this 3-D shooter puts you in control of a hi-tech battle mech on one of many suicide missions. Cutting-edge settings occur on land, underground and even underwater!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

GT Interactive

**Scorcher**

This graphically advanced, futuristic cyber-cycle racing game enables you to bounce off every loop and turn. You must pit your skills against a pack of high-speed rivals where only one will survive.

Windows 95

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



# CDROM Entertainment



## Acclaim Space Jam

Mega Star Michael Jordan and all of your favorite Looney Tunes characters go 3-on-3 against the alien Monstars in a intergalactic hoopfest! Bugs shoots! Daffy dunks! Jordan Jams!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$29<sup>99</sup>**



## Acclaim NBA Jam Extreme

An all-new 3D Jam for a new generation! Ultra-realistic polygon action, over 30 new rim-rocking dunks and 170 motion-captured NBA superstars. This time we've gone too far!

Windows 95

**\$47<sup>99</sup>**

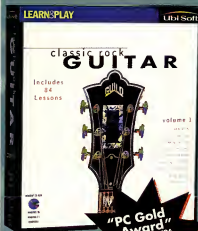


## Acclaim WWF: In Your House

The most mayhem-packed wrestling game ever! 10 sensational WWF superstars, including Shawn Michaels, Ahmed Johnson, and The Undertaker wreak havoc with all new ultra-devastating moves and super-plins to finish the job!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$47<sup>99</sup>**



**"PC Gold Award"**  
PC Plus, July/96  
**"Excellent"**  
Family PC, June/96

## Ubi Soft Learn & Play: Classic Rock Guitar, Volume 1

Learn to play guitar like the legends! Master essential techniques through songs made famous by artists like Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and the Beatles. It's like having a private teacher at your fingertips for a fraction of the cost!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**



## Psygnosis Destruction Derby

With no rules, no limits and no pit stopping, anything goes in this collision course of crumple zones. Take on the rigours of a full Championship season and pit your wits against a motley crew of psycho-waster racers such as the Suicide Squadettes, Skum and The Optician as you storm up the rankings from Rookie to Pro.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$44<sup>99</sup>**



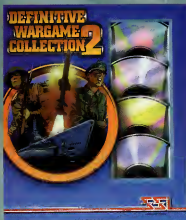
## Fox Die Hard Trilogy

Three times the action! You're at the center of three totally different, thrill-packed adventures. Every adventure you choose delivers amazing depth, palm-sweating realism and fully-rendered detail with over thirty incredible levels.

Windows 95

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



### Mindscape Dark Sun Online: Crimson Sands

Welcome to the biggest game in this series yet! All new regions guarantee months and months of exploration. Now you can deal with the meanest and most devious creatures of all - real opponents!

Windows 95

**\$14<sup>99</sup>**

### Mindscape Wargame Collection: Volume II

Wargamers can choose from a dozen strategic and tactical wargames spanning 8 centuries. Features award-winning games such as Panzer General, Steel Panthers, Genghis Kahn II: Clan of the Grey Wolf, and more!

DOS CD-ROM

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**



### Mindscape Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles

It's tank vs tank in this modern-day version of one of the most successful wargames ever! Set in Europe, Korea and the Middle East from 1850 to 1999. Command a single squad or an entire battalion. Super VGA graphics and intense animation help you feel the destruction raging all around you!

Windows 95

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

### Mindscape Star General

You are in control of a multi-planetary force to take back the galaxy from six steadily encroaching races. Experience stunning SVGA graphics with over 90 fully rendered 3-D starships and hundreds of ground units.

DOS CD-ROM

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**



### Microsoft Monster Truck Madness

The radical racing simulation that puts you in the untamed, high-speed, dirt-kicking, car-crushing world of monster trucks. Features 3 different types of racing and 3 skill levels keep the action fresh and the challenge real. Plus, all vehicle mechanics, course action, and terrain effects are modeled on actual monster trucks!

Windows 95

**\$44<sup>99</sup>**



### Microsoft Deadly Tide

Immerse yourself in a high-energy, all-out war in the eerie otherworld of the abyss, where you are the only hope against aliens plotting to submerge the planet. The cinematic graphics and CD-quality sound plunge you into action at the helm of the lethal Hydra craft.

Windows 95

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



### Microsoft Hellbender

Trust your wits and your air combat skills because you alone can prevent the destruction of all that you know. Experience stunning sound and graphics as you uncover secret new worlds and hidden objects every time you play.

Windows 95

**\$44<sup>99</sup>**

# CDROM Entertainment

Special Advertising Section

Sierra

## Trophy Bass 2

Challenge friends from around the world on any of 10 lakes, each featuring accurate geographical and topographical maps, depth readings, weed beds, lily pads...the works. Track your wins and losses against simulated pros. Plus, get tips from professional anglers.

Windows 95

**\$54.99**

Sierra

## Phantasmagoria: A Puzzle of Flesh

Out of the mental hospital for exactly one year, Curtis Craig wants a normal life, but something seems to have other plans. Curtis breaks into the hidden lower levels of Wynn Tech, discovering a secret so bizarre it is beyond human comprehension. Features challenging, thought-provoking gameplay, and more!

Windows 95

**\$57.99**

Sierra

## RAMA

You are a replacement astronaut sent to enter and explore this artificial world...to discover its purpose and reveal its secrets for humankind. Decipher a series of complex alien puzzles, avoid unseen dangers and reveal tantalizing clues - you may even survive to report your mysterious finding.

Windows 3.1/Windows 95

**\$54.99**

Sierra

## 3D Pinball: Creep Night

Only furious flipper-action and lightning-quick bank shots can vanquish the ghosts as you warp between the castle courtyard, mad scientist's lab, and dungeon catacombs. If you're good enough to uncover the bonus table, you'll face the Goblin King in a ghoulish grand finale!

Windows 95

**\$47.99**



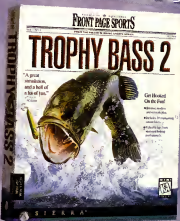
Interactive

## Picture Perfect Golf: The Prince Course

Experience the thrill of playing the most challenging course in Hawaii! Features thousands of real photographs and incorporates deep ravines, a tropical jungle, streams and a waterfall. The resulting par 4 is as challenging as it is beautiful.

Windows 3.1/Windows 95

**\$29.99**



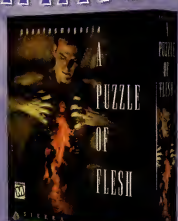
Interactive

## Picture Perfect Golf: Sugarloaf

The most realistic golf experience on your PC. Experience the thrill of playing the worlds finest golf courses. Features the Sugarloaf course, voted #1 in Maine by Golf Digest for 10 straight years.

Windows 95

**\$29.99**



Interactive

## The Sacred Mirror of Kofun

You control the outcome in this first-person game, traveling through three fully explorable 3-D environments. Help uncover clues gathered on spectacular underwater dives and in lush tropical jungles. This adventure game offers hours of exploration and fun!

Windows 95

**\$49.99**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!

# PC Accessories

Special Advertising Section



## Creative Labs Sound Blaster Discovery CD 8x

Discover again the excitement of multimedia with this complete multimedia package. Combines 32-volt, wave-table stereo audio, 3-D stereo sound, Plug-and-Play compatibility, and a high-performance 8x CD-ROM drive with entertaining multimedia software.

PC

**\$299<sup>99</sup>**



## Creative Labs Sound Blaster AWE32 Plug and Play

The next-generation wave-table synthesis sound card turbocharged with real instruments, sounds and real-time digital systems effects processing. Upgradeable E-ISA Systems Soundfont Technology allows new instruments and sounds.

MPC/Mac

**\$199<sup>99</sup>**



## Creative Labs Blaster CD 8x

Transform your PC into a multimedia powerhouse! Features IDE interface for enhanced performance, 1,200 KB/second data transfer rate, 230 ms access time, multi-session photo CD compatible, CD-ROM XA ready, CD-Plus support and front-loading tray mechanism.

PC

**\$159<sup>99</sup>**



## Advanced Gravis Blackhawk PC Joystick

The look and feel of an expensive flight stick at a comfortable price. Enjoy the stability of the weighted base and the control and precision of its responsive stick and throttle.

PC

**\$29<sup>99</sup>**

## ThrustMaster Phazer Pad

Dut-perform, out-maneuver and out-score every opponent with the ultimate combination of advanced functions and total programmability. Includes dozens of instant setups for the hottest games or configure each button to take advantage of your personal gameplay technique.

PC

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



## MioMini Snappy

Bring stunning images from video into your PC! Imagine taking a scene from your favorite movie or TV show! Just a click of a button and the image you pick will turn into a high resolution still - perfect for thousands of uses at work, at home, or at school!

IBM PC

**\$179<sup>99</sup>**



## Sybox Official Duke Nukem 3D Strategies and Secrets

Packed with every hint and trick you need to kill aliens and find the loot. Plus discover the best online lairs of fellow Duke Nukem 3D fanatics, or learn how to run Duke Nukem 3D on networks and play it through a modem.

Book

**\$17<sup>99</sup>**



## Logitech WingMan Warrior

This is the first double-fisted control system for Doom-style games which offers 360-degree independent aiming and intuitive movement. You maneuver realistically and get off shots with terminal accuracy in Doom, Hexen, and other hot 3D action games.

PC

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

# PC Accessories

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After Rebate **\$149<sup>99</sup>**

3 Pack Zip Drive Disks **\$49<sup>99</sup>**



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PC

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ful. Guaranteed to be 100% compatible with your  
brand of computer. Includes a lifetime warranty and  
toll-free technical support!

PC

4MB Parity Chips **\$39<sup>99</sup>**

8MB Parity Chips **\$79<sup>99</sup>**



It's so easy, it's so easy  
with PNY to add  
memory to your PC



**Affordable  
Memory  
PNY**  
The Memory Quality Standard



## Mad Catz Analog Steering Wheel

Designed especially for driving and flight games that utilize analog input.  
Compatible with analog games designed for PCs and compatibles. Features easy  
to follow instructions inside, true analog steering, accelerator, and brake, and 8  
digital action buttons with 8-way directional hat switch.

PC

With foot pedals **\$69<sup>99</sup>**

Digicom Systems

## Digicom Internal Fax/Modem 33600 bps

Move up to true V.34! This modem is twice  
as fast as V.32bis modems and supports  
V.Fast Class Specifications. Includes  
award-winning Fax Software. Windows 95  
compatible.

PC

**\$139<sup>99</sup>**



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Nintendo  
64 is  
HERE!

# Nintendo



## Nintendo Super Mario 64

A quantum leap in software and hardware guarantees that Mario is set to revolutionize the world of video games once again! Sound, color and clarity that completely immerses players in worlds filled with details, puzzles, enemies, traps and obstacles!

Nintendo 64

**\$69<sup>99</sup>**



## Nintendo PilotWings 64

Go beyond mere simulation! For the first time, in real time, players can climb, dive, spin and soar through completely realistic, limitless space! No matter which direction they turn!

Nintendo 64

**\$69<sup>99</sup>**



## Nintendo Tetris Attack

The Tetris tradition continues with another mind-boggling set of challenges that require skill, strategy and speed! Plus an incredible head-to-head two-player mode that multiplies the possibilities!

Super NES

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Nintendo Kirby Superstar

32 megs in a single cartridge gives players 8 different Kirby games! Kirby can use the abilities of 24 different high powered characters!

Super NES

**\$69<sup>99</sup>**

## Nintendo Tetris 2

Tease your brain with a tougher Tetris that has more shapes, more components and 30 levels! Features two-player fun with split-screen action!

Super NES

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Nintendo Super NES Killer Instinct Set

We brought the arcade home with the amazing moves and graphics of Killer Instinct. More ACM graphics, more speed and more moves make this bundle a winner! Includes: Killer Instinct game pak, Killer Cats music CD, one controller, RF switch and AC adapter.

Super NES

**\$99<sup>99</sup>**

## Nintendo Super Mario Kart

Exciting go-kart racing game, featuring Mario and his friends! Features split-screen, one or two-player simultaneous action! Choose from 20 crazy race courses! Rated K-A for kids ages 6 to adult.

Super NES

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**



## Nintendo Nintendo 64 Hardware System

The world's first true 64-bit home video game system that has the power and speed to create stunning and realistic 3-D graphics and gameplay performance that is not only superior to every other home system, but technologically impossible for other systems to approach, let alone match! Features Tri-linear Map Interpolation, real-time 3-D, real-time Z-buffering, and more!

Nintendo 64

**\$199<sup>99</sup>**

## Nintendo Controller 64

The advanced N64 controller is available as an accessory in 5 hot colors!

Choose from black, red, yellow, green, or blue. Standard grey is also available separately. Each controller has the full function joystick, memory back-up and data transfer capability!

Nintendo 64

**Each \$29<sup>99</sup>**





# Sony



## Sony Memory Card

Store high scores, custom settings, special pickups and more on this memory card featuring 8 Mbits of backup memory - twice the capacity of other cards!

PlayStation

**\$24<sup>99</sup>**



## Sony PlayStation Core System

Breakthru 32-bit processor. Stereo CD-quality sound. Full frame video at 30 frames per second. 16.8 million simultaneous colors. Custom ports for up to 2 controllers and 2 memory cards. Includes one controller.

PlayStation

**\$199<sup>99</sup>**



## Sony RFU Adaptor

No video input on your TV? No problem. Adaptor attaches easily to the back of the TV set. Includes RF converter, automatic TV-game switch and cable.

PlayStation

**\$29<sup>99</sup>**



**PlayStation™**

## PlayStation with Toshinden Bundle

**\$229<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Analog Joystick

Get a grip on arcade play! Bring the arcade home with this innovative

peripheral device. Use the digital mode for intense arcade play or switch to analog mode and drop into the ultimate cockpit experience. Dual stick design gives you four different axes for tighter control! Eight buttons on both base and stick provide more options during gameplay. Plus, unique "hat" directional pad on joystick allows you to easily select right, left, up and down.

PlayStation

**\$69<sup>99</sup>**



## Sony Multi-Tap

Now you can add even more control pads and memory cards to the PlayStation game console. Plug in one Multi-Tap for four players and for real intense gameplay, plug in two Multi-Taps for eight players!

PlayStation

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!

# PlayStation



## Sony NBA Shoot Out

The ultimate NBA challenge! Jam with all 29 NBA teams and over 300 players. Use five types of dunks including 360° jams and tomahawk slams. Real NBA attributes, three levels of difficulty, seven dynamic playing perspectives and announcer Dick Galloway add to your NBA experience!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Twisted Metal

You are what you drive. Big and tough, fast and deadly, or just plain crazy! Take your pick. Insane 3D combat! Onto sidewalks, off ramps, into pedestrians! Brake and swerve, fishtail around corners! Last one to survive wins!

PlayStation

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony NHL Face Off

The ultimate hockey simulation featuring full NHL season play, multiple playing perspectives, realistic hockey animations, and fully interactive 3D environment. Plus, players' abilities all based upon their actual NHL player stats.

PlayStation

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Mortal Kombat 3

Grab the third tidal wave of carnage and mystery! All new fatalities, animatronics, and babbles! Krack the Kombat Kodes and MK3 unlocks mysterious kombatants and grants even deadlier powers!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony NFL GameDay

All 30 NFL teams and over 2,500 real NFL players. Select Preshutdown, Regular Season, Playoffs or Super Bowl gameplay. Trade players and sign free agents. Also features realistic NFL action, player attributes, and complete stat tracking.

PlayStation

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony MLB Pennant Race

Provides the most exciting and realistic baseball experience ever. With all 28 Major League teams, all 28 stadiums rendered in true 3D, 700 real players, beautiful TV-style presentation, incredible graphics and realistic gameplay.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

# New From Sony

## Sony Epidemic

Your mission is to overthrow the tyrannical regime and to find a cure for a destructive disease. Goes way beyond Kileak with advanced 3-D rendered graphics, increased A-I and faster character movement.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



Epidemic



## Sony Project: Horned Owl

Fear the future! Metalica, a terrorist force of cyber-mechs, is attacking the city. You and a squad of mech-suited cops hit the ground, transformed into deadly defense units. The city is bucking, street by street. Can you stop a total mech takeover?

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



## Sony NFL GameDay 97

The NFL sim that defined Next Generation Sports Games is back. All new playbooks, animations, and strategy. Every team, player, and stadium including the all new Baltimore Ravens. Trade and create players and even sign free agents.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony NHL Face Off 97

All 26 NHL teams including the all new Phoenix Coyotes and 650+ top NHLPA players playing to the actual skills. All new animations and unprecedented strategy. Exhibition, Season, Stanley Cup Playoffs, and Real NHL awards.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



## Sony Twisted Metal 2

3-D car combat that reaches new heights from around the world. Eight new levels in all. Bigger, more interactive, more twisted than ever. Rearmed with new killer combo-attacks and wicked new cars. It's a whole new world to blow away!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



NCAA Football  
GameBreaker



## Sony King of Fighters 95

Unleash the ultimate one-on-one arcade fighter bringing together the largest selection of playable characters assembled in a video game. Choose from 26 warriors including characters from Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting to build your own dream team.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Crash Bandicoot

Travel across more than 30 beautifully rendered levels with solid controls and all the "best of the best" features of a platform game. Filled with hidden bonus levels, secret pathways and shortcuts, hordes of enemies, moving platforms and fiendish traps - only now you'll have to face the challenge of maneuvering in all 3-Dimensions!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony 2 Xtreme

Enjoy 4 Xtreme sporting venues that include 12 new courses! Includes all new vehicle specific maneuvers including "rail slides" and "ollie-air" on the skateboard and "backside and front-side rail grabs" on the snowboard.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Bogey: Dead 6

This isn't a Red Flag exercise - it's the real thing. You are a Navy fighter pilot - team member of an elite air squadron - and assigned to respond to special, classified, international missions. Enjoy exhilarating dog-fights with unequaled special effects, 360° movement and powerfully immersive sound effects. Feel the intensity with two different modes of play. Plus, three different types of combat: air-to-air, air-to-sea and air-to-ground assaults.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony Beyond the Beyond

Young Finn and his dragon, Silver, face trials almost beyond endurance as they hunt down Evil in their quest to save the Land of Canaan. Journey through ever-evolving landscapes in top-down, isometric view. Experience intense battle scenes in revolving 360° 3D clashes. Gain increasingly powerful hit points with every combat win.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sony NCAA Football GameBreaker

All 111 Division I-A and top Division I-AA teams, all 10 Conferences including the newly upgraded Big 12 and WAC. Features players with NFL 1st round draft pick characteristics and capabilities. Race for awards like the Doak Walker, Jim Thorpe, and even the Heisman Trophy!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

# PlayStation



## Mad Catz Mad Catz Analog Steering Wheel

Comes with true analog steering, accelerator, brake, eight digital action buttons plus 8-way directional pad. Compatible with analog and most digital games designed for PlayStation.  
PlayStation

**\$10 OFF**

when you purchase  
Ridge Racer Revolution  
and Analog Steering  
Wheels!

**\$59.99**



Namco

## Museum Volume 1

Remember the good old days? When a game was a game and the only tough choices were one-or-two player mode? Well those days are back and better than ever. A series of five video game compendiums comprised of the world's most famous arcade classics.

PlayStation

**\$49.99**

Namco

## Ridge Racer Revolution

This game has more of what you want. More cars. More speed. More precise handling. More challenging tracks. More of everything that made Ridge Racer one of the top selling titles in the world.

PlayStation

**\$49.99**



Namco

## Tekken 2

Arcade Perfect: refined, and ready to contest its title as the undisputed world champion of 3D fighting games. Features 3D new gameplay moves, new characters and more stages!

PlayStation

**\$49.99**



Playmates

## Burning Road

Choose from 3 specially modified custom muscle cars or a monster truck to tear down the road as you make your way to the checkered flag. Ram opponents off the road or into embankments as a viable strategy!

PlayStation

**\$54.99**



Playmates

## VMX Racing

Fully articulated players and bikes compete in a unique, fully 3-D real-time racing game that sets the standard for motocross simulations! Special throttle settings allow players to perform maneuvers and tricks just like the pros!

PlayStation

**\$54.99**



Playmates

## Battle Arena Toshinden 2

Choose your weapon and do battle against the greatest warriors of the world! Your favorite characters are back in the arena with new moves and special attacks. Two mysterious new contenders also join the battle!

PlayStation

**\$54.99**



Playmates

## PowerSlave

Your mission is to infiltrate Karnak, the ancient Egyptian city that has been sealed off by enemy forces. You have trained for all forms of enemy combat, but nothing can prepare you for the modern-day nightmare you are about to enter.

PlayStation

**\$54.99**

Saturn

**\$54.99**



**POWERSLAVE**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



# Electronic Arts



## Electronic Arts The Need for Speed

Intense realism puts you in the seat of real exotics. Features new and improved 32-bit rendering engine, two player support through split screen and link-up features, seven tracks, cars modeled after the real thing with Road & Track's performance data, and four race types.

PlayStation

**\$59.99**

Saturn

**\$59.99**



Electronic Arts

## Andretti Racing 97

Blazing fast gameplay and head-to-head competition that features split screen and link up action for up to 4 players simultaneously. Immerse yourself in a racing world with authentic TV-style presentation from racing's leading broadcast authorities. All the end over and flips, death-defying spin-outs and flying car parts that come with racing action blast onto this ultimate speedway!

PlayStation

**\$57.99**



## Electronic Arts Soviet Strike

This challenging action/simulation game takes all of the classic gameplay of the original and brings it to the forefront of 32-bit technology with photo-realistic action and superfast gameplay.

PlayStation

**\$57.99**



Electronic Arts

## NHL 97

Play as one of the more than 600 real NHL players or create your own player for your favorite team. With signature moves from NHL superstars. Get ready to drop the puck and experience hard-hitting action.

PlayStation

**\$57.99**

Saturn

Also available for Genesis.

**\$57.99**



## Electronic Arts Madden 97

Madden's fingerprints are all over this game! From player and team ratings to play design and strategy, no detail has been overlooked. Tournament tested gameplay, motion captured animations of real NFL players, modeled 3D stadiums, TV-style presentation, plus the genius of Madden.

PlayStation

**\$59.99**

Saturn

**\$59.99**

Also available for Genesis and Super NES.



## Electronic Arts NBA Live 97

The perennial superstar of interactive hoops comes back strong with updated teams, rosters, all 29 NBA teams and over 800 NBA players with full stats and ratings. All-new 3D animations deliver devastating dunks, pinpoint passing, stylin' dribbling, and deadly jumpers.

PlayStation

**\$57.99**

Saturn

**\$57.99**

Also available for Genesis and Super NES.



# Video Games

## Interplay Casper

This puzzle-solving challenge features 3D modeled graphics and frightfully intriguing gameplay. Morph into a host of objects, explore secret passageways and discover hidden clues while waging a battle of wits with Casper's hilarious uncles.

Saturn

\$59.99

PlayStation

\$59.99

3DO

\$59.99



## Konami MLBA Bottom of the 9th

It's a whole new ballgame! Big League play starts with Big League players. Enjoy 3-D animations of the real glitching and batting styles of several players - like Belle, Gwynn, Bonds, Rodriguez and others! Plus, an intuitive batting system that mimics real life!

PlayStation

\$49.99

Saturn

\$49.99



## Interplay VR Soccer 96

Gooodaaa! Featuring motion capture of the greatest players in international soccer, and Virtual FieldVision. Has it all, windmills, headers, dives, commentary by Barry Davies, the voice of the BBC, 44 real international teams - including Brazil - 94 World Cup winners! Build a soccer dream team with skill factor editing.

Saturn

\$59.99



## Interplay Loaded

As tall guys for F.U.B., the evil Elvis impersonator with a black hole in his belly, you've got to escape from a prison planet. Once you've succeeded, "seek and destroy" is all you need to know.

Saturn

\$59.99

Also available for PlayStation.



## Konami NFL Full Contact

This action-packed game features 3-D SGI graphics and motion capture with multi-views and instant replay.

PlayStation

\$49.99



## Konami Project Overkill

Choose to play any of four powerful mercenaries, armed to the teeth with multiple weapons as you face over 20 different types of inhuman adversaries.

PlayStation

\$49.99



## Konami Contra: Legacy of War

New, 32-bit update of the megahit! Includes all new 3-D texture mapped environments, beefed up weaponry, and 3 levels of difficulty. Plus, 4 unique Contra fighters to choose from including female cyborg and paramilitary robot.

PlayStation

\$54.99



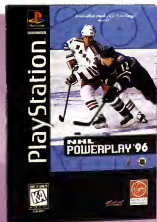
## Konami International Track and Field

Let the games begin! Motion capture ensures authentic Olympic-style action. And 3D texture-mapped polygon graphics give it that "live" look. Enjoy simultaneous competition by up to four players. Plus, a full selection of the most popular track and field events.

PlayStation

\$49.99

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!



Virgin Interactive

**NHL Powerplay '96**

Just a friendly game of ice-grinding, teeth rattling hockey. The only game that gives you the whole arsenal of offensive and defensive plays plus advanced artificial intelligence propels motion-captured players to strategize and react just like the pros!

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Saturn

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Virgin Interactive

**Spot Goes To Hollywood**

Guide the ever-cool Spot through a hilarious spoof of Hollywood's greatest film genres! Venture from film world to film world and discover countless secret passages, hidden laboratories, unknown bonuses and exotic locations. Super-slick hand-drawn and 3-D animation, combined with four star action, make this the coolest blockbuster you've ever played.

Saturn

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Virgin Interactive

**F1 Challenge**

Amazing 3-D graphics and tight control for game-play so intense you can almost feel your head rattle. Six action-packed tracks including Monte Carlo, Suzuka and Hockenheim. Customizable-player settings for greater control of your car's performance including mid-race pit row changes.

Saturn

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

ASCII

**King's Field**

An action-adventure game with complex characters, exciting gameplay and stunning graphics. Completely rendered in beautiful 3-D polygon graphics, and fully controllable 360° viewing. Enter a world of forgotten lore, where mighty dragons power the will of the evil Necron.

PlayStation

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Working Designs

**Dragon Force**

The world of Legendia has fallen prey to the frightening reign of Madurk. Eight different storylines follow your quest to command a myriad of generals. Each battle bursts onscreen with up to 200 warriors running, hacking, and slashing their way to victory in real-time!

Saturn

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Working Designs

**Shining Wisdom**

When evil ascends, and darkness consumes, wisdom will light the way, and bravery will make it shine. With 10,000 frames of SCI animation! 40+ hours of intense gameplay! Cool secret zones and items.

Saturn

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

Maxis

**SimCity 2000**

Creates and rule the city of your dreams - or your nightmares. You start by designing a city in which your resident Sims can live. As the city grows in population and wealth, you are presented with a myriad of options for improvement. But beware of the various disasters that can strike your city!

PlayStation

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

American Laser Games

**Shining Sword**

For centuries, legends have told of a mystical sword with untold power. In a medieval fantasy world of swords and sorcery, assume the role of one of four characters who search for the fabled Shining Sword.

PlayStation

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**

**Coming  
Soon!**

# Sega Saturn



## Sega Saturn System with Sega Rally

Three raging 32-bit processors work overtime to match the unbridled speed and visual intensity found only in the hellhows of the arcade. Comes with Sega Rally!

Saturn

**\$229<sup>99</sup>**

Saturn Core System **\$199<sup>99</sup>**

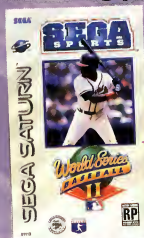


## Sega Controller

You haven't experienced pure control until you've held this baby in your hands. Ergonomic design enables unparalleled "gripability" and control. Six standard buttons make combination moves easier and faster to initiate. Left and right Shift Buttons included.

Saturn

**\$34<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega World Series Baseball II

League-leading graphics and gameplay. Four game modes. Brand new batting views. Injury tracking. Stat tracking. Continuous play-by-play announcing. Chase Cam. You can even draft your own expansion teams.

Saturn

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega Three Dirty Dwarves

Four genius kids, genetically altered in a bizarre military experiment, stay sane by playing a fantasy role-playing board game.

Saturn

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Sonic X-Treme

New characters, new special moves and an incredible 3-D playing environment combine to make this the most extreme game in Hedgehog history!

Saturn

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Mr. Bones

Silicon Graphics technology delivers mind boggling animation. AI-based control algorithms, never-before-seen character animations - all set to a marrow-tlinging acid jazz soundtrack.

Saturn

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Fighting Vipers

You've never fought in these neighborhoods... in barb wire cages and on air strips. Skate punks, Rollerbladers, and Rockers whip you over the head with their Flying V. This is fighting game perfection.

Saturn

**\$54<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Nights with 3-D Control Pad

Combines the dynamics of a flight simulator with the speed of a racing game! Gamers are propelled into a truly amazing virtual dream land filled with real-time worlds and psychedelic characters. Comes with 3-D control pad!

Saturn

**\$69<sup>99</sup>**

Without Control Pad **\$49<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!

# Sega Pico

Special Advertising Section

## Sega Pico System with Huckle and Lowly's Busiest Day Ever

A revolutionary new way for children 3-7 to learn basic developmental skills, explore new worlds and educate themselves while also having fun!

Pico

**\$139<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega Disney's The Lion King: Adventures at Pride Rock

This delightful learning adventure features Simba, Nala and other classic Disney characters from one of the most popular animated films of all times as they discover the alphabet, hidden pictures and mazes. For ages 4 to 7.

Pico

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega The Berenstain Bears: A School Day

Join the Berenstain Bears for a busy day at school. Children will learn the alphabet and create words by recognizing letters. Objects and animals will come to life as your children match and learn shapes and put them in their place.

Pico

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega Disney's Pocahontas: Riverbend Adventures

Children have a lot to learn from the characters in this great new Pico title based on the Disney adaptation of America's favorite story...and they'll have fun doing it! It's rich in lessons about nature, logic and memory. For ages 5-7.

Pico

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega The Muppets On The Go!

Join the Muppets and enjoy a grand day out in their all-terrain jeep. Children will develop their problem solving, matching, creative and memory skills in five different environments, such as the Forest Tailgate Party! Ages 3-6.

Pico

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega Sonic The Hedgehog's GameWorld

Let's go to the fair and visit Sonic's GameWorld! Children uncover hidden talents while playing Hoops, Skee-ball, Robotnik-Bash and 10 more fun games and activities.

Pico

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega Math Antics with 101 Dalmatians

Join Pongo and Perdita on exciting adventures when their love pups are kidnapped from their happy home. Children solve number problems while helping rescue the puppies from evil Cruella De Vil.

Pico

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

## Sega A Year at Pooh Corner

Spend winter, spring, summer and fall with Winnie the Pooh and his friends as they teach children how to recognize shapes, numbers, and letters. Develop dexterity as you help Pooh travel the maze to the honey pot.

Pico

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**





# Genesis & Game Gear



## Sega Nomad

Portable Genesis video game system which is fully compatible with over 500 available Sega Genesis game cartridges. Also adaptable for use on a TV. Supports 64 colors. Includes fully integrated 6-button control pad and additional controller port for two player gameplay.

Nomad

**\$179<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega 6 Button Arcade Pad

The 6 Button controller that gamers demand! Special moves on the top sports and fighting games. Compatible with virtually all Sega Genesis, Genesis Nomad, Genesis 32X and Sega CD games.

Genesis

**\$19<sup>99</sup>**

# SEGA™



## Sega Sonic Blast

Now, Sonic and his world are 3D thanks to super fast SGI rendered graphics. The evil genius Robotnik is after the Chaos Emeralds and it's up to Sonic to stop him.

Genesis

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



Game Gear

**\$29<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega World Series Baseball 96

All 700+ Major League players are ready to play in this critically acclaimed baseball game that is now available for the PC. From the Chicago White Sox to the Los Angeles Dodgers... all 28 teams are here.

Genesis

**\$59<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Virtua Fighter Animation

Seven of the original Virtua Fighter characters plus many of their awesome arcade moves, adds up to superior gameplay. Now, the Virtua Fighter experience is portable!

Game Gear

**\$34<sup>99</sup>**

# GENESIS



## Sega Genesis Core System with College Football National Championship II

For a great price gamers get the Sega Genesis and College Football National Championship II, one of the great Genesis classics. Includes 16-bit Genesis system, 1 control pad, AC adaptor, and auto RF switchbox.

Genesis

**\$99<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Universal AC Adaptor

Save your batteries! Provides optimum power to all your Genesis, Nomad and Game Gear products. Lightweight and durable. Recommended for use with the Sega Powerstrip.

Accessory

**\$14<sup>99</sup>**



## Sega Game Gear with Super Columns Pack

Great value! The best-selling color portable gaming system teams up with Super Columns to give you hours of addictive puzzle play! Includes Game Gear System and Super Columns game cartridge.

Game Gear

**\$99<sup>99</sup>**

Call 1-800-800-5166 for the store nearest you!

# Video Games

Spectrum HoloByte

## Top Gun: Fire At Will!

Climb in and blast your way through the enemy! Defeat each level boss to grab special weapons for upcoming missions. Dogfight against deadly opponents with an arsenal of explosive, hard-hitting weapons.

PlayStation

\$59<sup>99</sup>

Spectrum HoloByte

## Gunship

Pilot authentic military helicopters, featuring realistic flight models, weapons and threats. Fly the deadly AH-64A Apache, the fierce UH-60K Blackhawk and the lethal AH-688 Comanche in night and day battles over the Persian Gulf and Central Europe.

PlayStation

\$49<sup>99</sup>

Fox

## Die Hard Trilogy

Three explosive games on one action-packed disc! Only you can save the day in Die Hard with over a dozen levels in a thrilling, fully navigational 3D environment!

PlayStation

\$59<sup>99</sup>

Also available for Saturn and Windows 95.

Capcom

## Darkstalkers

Based on the #1 arcade sensation! Soon to be released as a syndicated weekly TV series from Capcom and Gfroz Entertainment.

PlayStation

\$59<sup>99</sup>Now \$39<sup>99</sup>

Mindscape

## Steel Harbinger

In the year 2069, bizarre oblong meteorites rain from the sky. Innocent people transform into mechanized wrecking machines. The fate of the Earth rests on one young woman, whose body itself is infected.

PlayStation

\$54<sup>99</sup>

Williams

## Mortal Kombat Trilogy

Let the vendetta begin! All 3 previous MKs crammed together in one hellish apocalypse. Features radical new characters along with all the old nemeses.

PlayStation

\$59<sup>99</sup>

Williams

## Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

You decide the ending in this ultimate fighting game. Contains new characters, tons of different artwork, numerous hidden characters plus new, lethal moves!

Saturn

\$59<sup>99</sup>

Capcom

## Street Fighter Alpha 2

Introducing the most original attack ever - the custom combo. Now you can create your own super combos with a rapid-fire assault. Features more incredibly smooth animation, vibrant backgrounds and a collection of 18 fighters.

PlayStation

\$59<sup>99</sup>

Fox

## Independence Day

Fight your way past waves of attackers to destroy the alien mother ship and save the planet, city by city. Experience hyper-realistic plane handling in full 3-D graphics in this outrageous flight-simulated action game.

PlayStation

Coming Soon in 97.



Mindscape

## Necrodom

You are at the wheel of an incredibly powerful armored vehicle, bristling with high-tech weaponry. This 3-D, real-time action-shooter features a super-realistic environment, and more gut-wrenching action than you can handle!

PlayStation

\$49<sup>99</sup>



# Video Games

Activision

## Time Commando

History is your battlefield. The future you must defend. A deadly virus has invaded the military's top secret super computers. If core memory cannot be restored in time, the future will be ruled by chaos...and the virus will mean the world's collapse.

PlayStation

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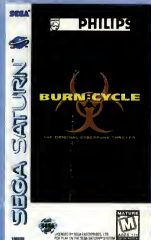
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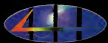
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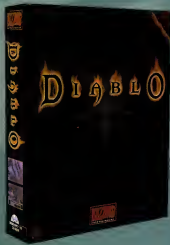
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**Black Dawn** PlayStation **Crash Bandicoot** PlayStation **Die Hard Trilogy** PlayStation **VF Kids** Saturn  
**Albion** PC **Indiana Jones' Desktop Adventures** Macintosh **Z PC** **NHL '97** Genesis **Tekken 2** arcade

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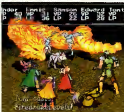
## PlayStation

### Beyond the Beyond

**Publisher:** SCEA

**Developer:** Camelot

Unless you're below the age of 12, prepare to be yawned by *Beyond the Beyond*. As the first



**Looks good, but is *Beyond the Beyond* good enough for 32-bit?**

Japanese-style RPG available for PlayStation, it doesn't bode well — it's painfully derivative, plodding, and not even a terribly challenging adventure.

The story follows a youngster named Finn, roaming the great lands of Marion on a quest to save the world from the evil Bandore forces. The visuals are woefully lacking, relying on the usual squat, superdeformed characters with few new wrinkles or even interesting special effects. There are some concessions made to new technology when Finn and friends are thrown into fighting mode — the view becomes 3D — but unfortunately, the fighting itself is none too exciting, and it happens way too often. It's no wonder the Age of Osiris is over: they all died of boredom. A fight breaks out every 10 seconds, and it gets old real fast.

To its credit, *Beyond the Beyond* has a long, fairly interesting story, which should please some RPG enthusiasts. But as with many RPGs, the story is extremely linear, and when you've gone through it once, it's over. And as the first RPG from SCEA for the PSX, it has to be considered a weak entry (especially given the wondrous new approach taken by Square for *Final Fantasy VII*, or

## PlayStation

# RISING FUN

### Black Dawn

**Publisher:** Virgin

**Developer:** Black Ops

Here's a nice surprise. Black Ops was the development house responsible for *Agile Warrior*, a flight sim whose one outstanding quality was an impressive set of explosions. Otherwise, the game failed to excite on any meaningful level.

*Black Dawn* — an assault chopper sim — is its latest offering, and while the explosions aren't as impressive as in *Agile Warrior*, their removal seems to have been worth the sacrifice, because as a game, *Black Dawn* is top stuff. Indeed, compared to its immediate competition — the totally disappointing *Guruship* — it's a pleasing combination of excellent graphics and dead-on game play.

Strapped into the cockpit of a heavy-armed chopper, players are thrust into a series of seven missions, each with multiple objectives. The approach is mildly reminiscent of EA's *Strike* series, although with less of a strategy component. Objectives range from destroying SAM installations or enemy Hind helicopters to saving navy SEALs that have gotten caught behind enemy lines and safely returning them to base. Destroyed enemies yield numerous power-ups in the form of better missiles, cannon upgrades, armor, and, of course, fuel. As with *Agile Warrior*, these items are left magically floating in the air for pick-up — and some may question this strange feature in an otherwise realistic environment.

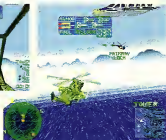
Graphically speaking, every object in *Black Dawn* has an impressively high level of detail, and explosions, while not as "Oooh! Aaaa!" as those in *Agile Warrior*, can still rank among the best seen on the PlayStation to date. Backing the action is a heavy-duty Redbook audio soundtrack that would be at home in a major motion picture.

Despite all of these positives, *Black Dawn* is a little disappointing in terms of the number of missions — seven just isn't that many — and while the game is initially quite challenging, with a little experience players can run right through. A split-screen, two-player option adds to the longevity, but more levels would have been better. Still, while it lasts, *Black Dawn* is a hell of a ride.

Rating: ★★★★★



**Mission-based aerial destruction doesn't get much better**



**E**ach month, *Next Generation's* team of reviewers plays, reviews, and then rates the month's new game releases. Our opinion as to each game's merits is expounded in the text, but as a rough guide to a game's worth (or lack of it) then refer the following ratings.

★★★★★ **Revolutionary**  
 Brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed; a new high-water mark.

★★★★ **Excellent**  
 A high-quality and inventive new game. Either a step forward for an existing genre, or a successful attempt at creating a new one.

★★★ **Good**  
 A solid and competitive example of an established game style.

★★ **Average**  
 Perhaps competent; certainly uninspired.

★ **Bad**  
 Crucially flawed in design or application.

## PlayStation



Spin dashes and platform jumping — sure it's glossy, and it does play well, but we've all seen this a hundred times before

# NO NEW TRICKS

## Crash Bandicoot

Publisher: SCEA

Developer: Naughty Dog

OK. Nintendo wouldn't be anywhere without Mario. Sega wouldn't have had a chance in the 16-bit wars without Sonic. However, in the 32-bit age, newcomer Sony seems to be doing pretty well without a definable mascot to lead the way. Apparently it wants to try anyhow. Enter one bandicoot with an attitude (once more, and for the record, bandicoots, family Peramelidae, are a type of small marsupial indigenous to Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea — just read "miscellaneous mammal"). And without a doubt, *Crash* has attitude by the bucketload. The game has humor, it's bright and colorful, includes a lot of impressive graphic flourishes, controls well, and, in the strictest sense, uses a 3D environment to good effect without a hint of draw-in.

It's also, without a doubt, the single most derivative game to ever hit a console.

It's not as if the developer, Naughty Dog, has much of a track record — *Way of the Warrior* is in the running with *Kasumi Ninja* and *SHADOW: War of Succession* for the title of worst fighting game ever made — but anyone who's played even one side-scrolling action game could have come up with every single game element found in *Crash*. See Crash jump over pits! Watch Crash kill enemies by jumping on their heads! Marvel as Crash collects 100 fruit for an extra life! Gasp as Crash leaps across collapsing platforms! Be amazed as Crash dodges fireballs! And it's all in Amazing 3D™! Give us a break. The only thing missing is an underwater stage.

In the interest of fairness, it is worth pointing out that, technically, the game is executed very well. Unlike *Mario 64*, players aren't free to roam just anywhere — in fact, you're restricted to a narrow track — but the characters are true polygon-based models, and the simplistic environment puts so little demand on the PlayStation's 3D capability that everything onscreen is rock solid. It's challenging without being frustrating, and *Crash's* twitchy-eyed antics are amusing in their own way. With even an ounce of creativity, this could have been a classic, but you've seen — and played — all this before.

Rating: ★★★



Some stages are even played from the side — look familiar?

# rating playstation

even to a lesser extent SCEA itself in the King's Field series).  
**Rating: ★★**

## Gridrunner

**Publisher:** Virgin Interactive

**Developer:** Radical

*Gridrunner* is a futuristic cross between capture the flag and tag — in fact, it's original working title was *Eurit* ("You're it," geddit?). Players run around a series of catwalks, collecting flags until the quota has been met for that level. The tricky part of the game, however, isn't grabbing flags, it's the tag element, in that you can only collect flags if you are not "it." So, most of the time the object is to run into the other player(s), thereby making them "it."

In addition to just running about, players have the ability to create bridges to span gaps and shoot projectiles to slow opponents and clear mines. Bonus stars in the single-player mode enable your character to increase agility, speed, and weapon power. Multiplayer options include split screen and



Slow as a single player game, *Gridrunner* is multiplayer fun

link-up, which greatly expand the game's replay value. While not particularly innovative, *Gridrunner* offers its share of fun, especially in multiplayer modes.

**Rating: ★★★**

## Project Overkill

**Publisher:** Konami

**Developer:** Konami

Flying out of the gate in the More Gore sweepstakes, here comes Konami's *Project Overkill*, one mother of a shooter played from an isometric perspective. Don't worry about the story, don't even worry about mission objectives,

just get in there and kill. A lot. Indeed, there's little to this apart from the violence: There's some strategy involved to avoid getting nailed yourself, of course, and some of the levels are constructed with vaguely puzzle-like elements, but none of this ever rises above what you'd find in, say, *Doom*.

Which isn't exactly a bad thing. In fact, *Project Overkill* is rather neatly constructed. In general, the missions are long enough to make you feel like you're accomplishing something without becoming tedious, and the level of difficulty, while high, keeps you on your toes. There's also a plethora of neat details: walls go transparent when you step behind them; bodies explode when shot; walk over a dead body and not only is there a nice squishy sound, but the character leaves bloody footprints.

On the other hand, there are problems. For one, in areas where there are two levels with rooms on top of each other the combination of transparent walls and isometric perspective can be



Fast paced and violent in the extreme, *Overkill* almost makes you hate yourself for liking it

confusing. The controls — set up *Robotron*-style, moving the character with the direction pad and shooting with the buttons — is intuitive enough, but the perspective requires a lot of shooting along the diagonals, which means a lot of time spent trying to hit two buttons at once. While there are four characters to choose from, each with different weapons, there isn't much variety to them and you'll never find a really big gun.

Despite this, *Project Overkill* is oddly compulsive, never

## PlayStation

# STAYIN' ALIVE

## Die Hard Trilogy

**Publisher:** Fox Interactive

**Developer:** Probe

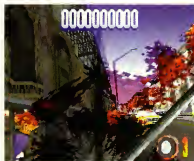
This is no small achievement. *Die Hard Trilogy* is nothing less than three entirely separate and completely different games that follow the exploits of the luckiest cop ever to walk the Earth, John MacClane, all wrapped up in one package (and printed on one disk, just to clear that up). As such, it varies somewhat in quality among the three "episodes," but overall it's well worth the investment.

The first section, patterned after the first *Die Hard* film, is a 3D shooter, using the second-person, over-the-shoulder perspective that seems to be gaining in popularity these days. This is easily the best of the three sections of the game — fast-paced, challenging, and gory, with very responsive control. Rather than have the camera view zoom in when the character's back is to a wall, as in *Mario 64* or *Tomb Raider*, the designers have opted for a different solution: make the walls transparent. It works, and in fact it's kind of impressive.

The next section, based on *Die Harder*, is a first-person shooter patterned somewhat after *Virtua Cop*, in which the player is shuttled through a terrorist-riddled airport blasting everything in sight. It's compatible with the light gun (Konami released with *Romero Owl*, and it's a good idea to get one. Without it, controlled using the joystick, it's a real pain. With a gun, it's a lot of fun, if flawed in as much as the animation is stiff, and since every object in the background can be shot up and damaged, the frame rate occasionally slows to a crawl to accommodate it.



Three very different games in one package — that's *Die Hard Trilogy*



Windshield wipers are handy for pedestrian spills

The last section is a driving game set in New York. As in *Die Hard* with a Vengeance, MacClane is chasing down bombs, following the on-screen compass to each bomb and smashing it before it goes off. This one is played much like Gametek's *Quarantine*, except that you're not supposed to hit pedestrians — well, maybe mimes. This is the weakest entry on the disk, and not much of a note to end on, but enjoyable enough.

None of the three sections is especially original or even that deep. However, taken as a whole, with each section ending just before it has a chance to get tiresome, you're given a lot of varied game play that's lightweight, but entertaining. Probe is to be commended for trying something this different.

**Rating: ★★★★★**

The danger is back.  
And it's contagious.

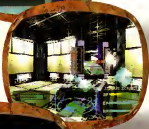


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Fig. 1: Electric chair



Fig. 2: Gallows

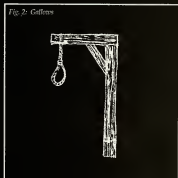


Fig. 3: Confiner



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promising anything more than the straight-up action which it delivers in spades. If you just feel like turning off your brain and blasting everything around you into meaty puddles, it works.  
**Rating: \*\*\*\***

### SimCity 2000

**Publisher:** Maxis  
**Developer:** Maxis

Since Maxis released the original *SimCity* in early '89 and won a gazillion awards, a whole slew of *Sim*Somethings have come along (anyone remember *SimAnt*?), but few are as satisfying as the original. This latest incarnation for PlayStation is a true, if uninspired, descendant.

For the sake of those who have been trapped in a closet for the last few years, the challenge is to build and manage a city, hoping that your design will attract millions of *SimCitizens*. Players act as mayor, dealing with realistic headaches like financial concerns, crime, traffic, pollution, and so on. And if that's not enough, other challenges like natural disasters crop up and, just for fun, the odd Godzilla-style monster — hey, it could happen. Of course, disasters are much different from the PC version (something every mayor wishes was a case of art imitating life).

The graphics aren't much different from the PC version except for one new feature, a 3D



In *Sim-business* as useful in *Sim City 2000* for PlayStation

"ride-through" mode, offering a cruise through town in a limo. There are no hot tubs and champagne, but it is a fun use of the PlayStation's 3D capabilities (even though the city is creepily devoid of any inhabitants).

One caveat about the interface: it's more than a little clunky controlling the game with a PlayStation joystick. The menu layout and icon selection system just screams for a mouse, especially for anyone used to playing it on a PC. In fact, it appears to be the same layout as the PC version. But for those new to the *Sim* line or who lack the funds for a \$3,000 machine, the joystick is a minor inconvenience in an otherwise solid game.  
**Rating: \*\*\***

## Saturn

### Alien Trilogy

**Publisher:** Acclaim  
**Developer:** Probe

Released a few months ago on the PlayStation, *Alien Trilogy* is another in the growing list of third-party titles developed for the PlayStation then ported to the Saturn. In the past, such games have been less than flattering to the Saturn hardware, resulting in products that accurately depict



*Alien Trilogy* proven that *Alien* is the perfect movie license to translate into a videogame

the original gameplay design but don't quite live-up to the PlayStation's graphic prowess (nor that of the Saturn's first-party titles). However, Acclaim can now claim to have shocked and surprised us not just once with *Alien Trilogy* for PlayStation (an "Acclaim game based on a movie license that was actually good" shock/horror), but also with the Saturn version.

A very close match in every way, *Alien Trilogy* is as good a game on the Saturn as it ever was on the PlayStation — and if you missed the original version, that means this game is very good indeed.

Built around solid gameplay elements such as explosive action and light puzzle-solving, *Alien Trilogy* doesn't do that much in the way of fancy gimmicks (or even anything you'd call noticeably innovative) but with several intricate levels of intense — and at times quite eerie — action, it just feels right all the way through. Face-huggers scuttle through the corridors, and that *Alien* queen is a challenge to kill. Also, the game offers everything you'd need from maps to mega-weapons and never leaves you wanting for anything except the next level.

*Alien Trilogy* is one of a precious few movie-licensed titles that actually holds its own as a game. Who would have thought it would come from Acclaim?  
**Rating: \*\*\*\***

### Robo-Pit

**Publisher:** Kokopelli  
**Developer:** Altron

This is another title that originally hit the PlayStation and has now been ported to Saturn. It's also one of a handful that's nearly identical for both systems. Falling under the "You don't see that everyday" heading, *Robo-Pit* is a bizarre little battle game in which two mechs battle it out in a 3D arena filled with various obstacles and potential weapons. What makes it so bizarre is the process of building your own mech before going into battle, in that the player can choose everything



After creating your own mech in *Robo-Pit*, it's time to take it into battle and test your skills

from body type and color, to weapons and even the shape of the eyes. It's interesting, and there's certainly enough options, but no matter how carefully constructed, the mech always comes out like some nightmarish Mr. Potato Head, more likely to be found flailing on its side at a ninth-grade science fair than in a battle to the death.

Goofy appearances aside, however, the light-hearted approach belies the undeniable grace and efficiency with which the mechs move. As with the

PlayStation version, one-player mode consists of working your way up through 100 computer-controlled competitors. This gives the game a substantial lifespan, but the level of challenge isn't quite up to the task — 100 levels become mildly tedious. The two-player, split-screen option adds a lot but also comes up short due to the reduced field of vision of split-screen. *Robo-Pit* will never rank with the best of 'em, but it requires a fair amount of strategy and undeniably provides hours of goofy gaming fun.  
**Rating: \*\*\***

### Saturn Bomberman

**Publisher:** Hudson (Japan)  
**Developer:** Hudson

The basic formula has been the same for years, and it's not likely to change much any time soon. Much like earlier *Bomberman* games, the one-player game on offer here consists of a quest mode that leads players through several different mazes, facing many different foes. Drop bombs, gain power-ups, and avoid various deadly obstacles — it's not the greatest game, but it's not bad.

Everyone knows, however, that the best part of any *Bomberman* game is the multiplayer battle mode, and *Saturn Bomberman* manages to go beyond any other *Bomberman* in one very crucial area: it can accommodate up to 10 players at a time (via two multi-taps), which simply puts it over the top. Included in the battle mode (2 to 10 player mode) are all of the best items from *Bomberman* past, such as the boot, glove, skate, and those dreaded curses. You'll also find some of the lesser known elements from games like *Super Bomberman 3*, such as the



Proof that more really is merrier, the 10-player option in *Saturn Bomberman* is truly the game'n defining, and most outstanding, feature



## rating saturn

kangaroos. For the most part, if it's part of the Bomberman heritage, it's in this game.

Of course, to take advantage of the 10-player mode, you'll need a Saturn, two multi-taps, 10 controllers, and a television big enough to keep players from going blind (the last time Hudson took a stab at Bomberman on such a huge multiplayer scale, it resorted to using a custom HDTV set-up and limiting the game to appearances at trade shows).

Unfortunately, while *Saturn Bomberman* is undoubtedly fun, it does in many ways go to prove the old adage that less is often more: the new power-ups and plethora of returning old ones only serve to distract slightly from the dead-on gameplay of *Super Bomberman 2*. And while ten players is a phenomenal achievement, this latest version is different without being significantly better. It should be pointed out, however, that even a mediocre Bomberman game is still worth checking out, and is worth for gregarious Saturn fans.

Rating: ★★

## Tetris Plus

Publisher: Jaleco

Developer: The Tetris Company

The original game of Tetris is as near as anyone's ever got to



The new puzzle mode in Tetris Plus is a nice diversion for fans, but no match for the original

videogame perfection. It's a simple classic of design, and coming across a new title that monkeys around with the formula to create a "new and exciting" puzzle game warrants immediate attention and investigation.

Which leads us to *Tetris Plus*. Of course, you can't have Tetris Plus without first having Tetris, and, thankfully, the original

version is included in the game for the one or two people reading this who have somehow managed to avoid it. The Plus part consists primarily of a puzzle option and a two-player vs. mode. The two-player mode is great for competitive players anxious to show off their expertise but not much more. The puzzle option, however, strays even further from the traditional game. Backed up with an adventure storyline, the puzzle mode has the player arranging blocks to create paths through which a trapped adventurer can escape the screen. The concept is interesting and not without its hooks, but in the end, it barely approaches the level of appeal of just playing just the simple, original Tetris.

Rating: ★★

## Three Dirty Dwarves

Publisher: Sega

Developer: Sega Soft

The side-scrolling action game has become a severely tired formula over the past few years, especially since the advent of 32- and 64-bit power. Every once in a

while, however, a game comes along that manages to exist within the constraints of the formula, yet still push beyond it. Make no mistake, *Three Dirty Dwarves* (TDD), a game in which



Three Dirty Dwarves combines traditional action elements with creative and enjoyable twists

you are in control of, well, three dirty dwarves, is, for the most part, a side-scrolling action game. But it offers just enough new spins on the tradition to make it a worthwhile venture.

*Three Dirty Dwarves* is the first offering from splinter Sega development group Sega Soft,

## Saturn

## THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

## Virtua Fighter Kids

Publisher: Sega

Developer: Sega

Released first on Sega's ST-V (Titan) arcade board, *Virtua Fighter Kids* (VF Kids) is an excellent fighting game. Unfortunately, it was a better game the first time around when it was called *Virtua Fighter 2*. Yes, the gameplay is changed slightly by shortening each character's reach but only enough to throw off your timing a little. Yes, the characters are cute, although the argument could be made they're less cute than disturbing — it turns out that anime-style, superdeformed characters look especially freaky in three dimensions. Plus, although the characters look and sound like they're about 10 years old, Shun Di is still totally bald, and even more worrisome, Sara is still no less, um, well-developed in the chest.

Nonetheless, the result is a brighter, more comical version of the game you bought last Christmas, and taken on its own, it must be said that everything great about the *Virtua Fighter* series is still great in *VF Kids*. The key features are superior character balance, lightning-fast response, and enough strategic depth built into the realistic fighting styles to keep you digging out new combos for months. It can also be said that Sega went all out when it came to creating a home version — extras such as a ranking mode, camera control, extremely funny movies, and custom play controls represent only a few of the nuggets designed to increase the lifespan of a game meant to entertain for only a few minutes at a time in the arcade.

Finally, while the graphics are simplistic, they're certainly not unsophisticated. The first thing you're likely to notice is how vibrant it all seems. Considering the game is supposed to evoke feelings of youth and jubilation, the design and colors are dead-on. Second, the game is full of tiny, telling details, like the many different facial expressions or the advanced head-dodging added since *Virtua Fighter 2*. It's little things like this that keep the game from being written off totally as a gimmick. In the end, *VF Kids* is a very solid game which will, unfortunately, likely appeal to a relatively small audience (no pun intended).

Rating: ★★



The characters are far from threatening, and the graphics may scream "kid's game," but VF Kids is every bit as sophisticated as its "older" counterpart

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and while the game isn't terribly innovative, it still follows many of the rules for excellence within its chosen form. The first rule is variety, and although a quick glance at the game may have you convinced you've seen it all before, you haven't. The developers have put quite a bit of work into making sure the player is surprised on a regular basis, with an odd stage that plays more like baseball and another that is basically a high-tech version of whack-a-mole.

Another rule is constant challenge: As soon as one obstacle is overcome, another is already on its way down the pike.

One final guideline, if not exactly a rule, is to throw in plenty of humor, and TDD is chock full of comedy, genuinely likable characters, and plenty of bizarre background details. When the day is through, *Three Dirty Dwarves* is short of genius and certainly isn't innovative by any stretch, but it's well above average and a bright spot in an otherwise overworked genre.

Rating: ★★

## 3DO

### Olympic Soccer

**Publisher:** U.S. Gold  
**Developer:** Silicon Dreams

Beyond the admittedly substandard graphics of *Olympic Soccer* lies a silky-smooth arcade-style soccer engine that really puts the player in the game. The polygonal players aren't much to look at, but the motion-captured animation has an undeniable grace. On the pitch, the game sets a feverish pace of goal-scoring that is sure to make hard-core sim fans wince. However, approaching *Olympic Soccer* as an arcade game and ignoring a certain amount of realism lets you in for an extremely entertaining time.

An Olympic license is usually the kiss of death for a game, but



Smooth animation and gameplay make up for some not-so-nice graphics in *Olympic Soccer*

Silicon Dreams managed to inject some top-notch gameplay and avoids the fate so common to other sports games. It still can't compete with *FIFA*, especially given they're both available for 3DO, but for a fast-paced, exciting one- or two-player game, the 3DO doesn't have many games of this caliber.

Rating: ★★

### Olympic Summer Games

**Publisher:** U.S. Gold

**Developer:** Silicon Dreams

With the glut of track & field games out for the 32-bit systems, *Olympic Summer Games* is the only one coming to the 3DO and probably the only one that could make the transition without losing much in graphics. The unique part of *Olympic Summer Games* is the two different play modes: in arcade mode the gameplay is traditional button mashing straight to the finish line, but in the olympic mode timing is the key to victory.



New events like fencing offer some variations from the norm, making *OSG* a notable title

Either way, the game offers some great competition, and the usual events (100m dash, pole vault, javelin, long jump, triple jump, high jump, discus, 400m, swimming, and hammer toss) along with some new events (archery, skeet, fencing, and rapid fire pistol) spice things up a little and set it apart. The graphics can't even come close to Konami's *International Track & Field* or Sega's *Decathlete*, but the varied gameplay is enough to make *OSG* a fine addition to any sturdy 3DO collection.

Rating: ★★

## PC

### Afterlife

**Publisher:** LucasArts

**Developer:** LucasArts

*Afterlife* is a simulation of, well, the afterlife. You manage both Heaven and Hell in a *SimCity* 2000-style environment, and your goals are to keep the flow of souls into your realms high, keep them happy (or in the case of



Running Hell like a business. No, it's not a sim of the Republican convention, it's *Afterlife*

Hell, miserable), and keep your economy strong.

The economy depends on a steady influx of new souls (you receive one penny for each soul that enters the afterlife). Your expenses come from paying a large staff of demons and angels to keep the hereafter running and from building new punishments and rewards, which must become larger and more elaborate (angelic or demonic) over time.

Heaven and Hell are run pretty similarly, but there are subtle differences. The roads in Hell, for example, function better when convoluted and crowded (nothing in Hell should be

comfortable) while the roads in Heaven should be straight, smooth, and efficient.

Although imaginative and filled with delightful humor, *Afterlife* doesn't go too far beyond the *SimCity* style of management. It is more involved though, since there are two cities to manage, and it's also possible to intervene directly on Earth, pushing the population in directions that will benefit your realms. There's also a great deal of complexity underlying the belief systems of the populations, a complexity that has a great deal of impact.

*Afterlife* is an imaginative, entertaining simulation that, if not exactly groundbreaking, at least provides hours of solid entertainment to the dedicated simulation fan.

Rating: ★★

### Normality

**Publisher:** Interplay

**Developer:** Gremlin

In a strange, alternate future the Norm Police control society, imposing a rigid regimen of conformity, boredom, and mundanity on a passive and

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PC

# RPG TREASURE

## Albion

**Publisher:** Blue Byte

**Developer:** Blue Byte

Good role-playing games are in short supply nowadays. However, Albion is a bright spot in the desert and has a lot to offer any RPG fan. The game begins far in the future and aboard a starship where players find themselves cast as a shuttle pilot with the name of Tom Driscoll. After a short time spent exploring the ship, Tom gets called to make a shuttle flight to the surface of a mineral-rich planet. He crash lands with government inspector Rainer Hofstedt, and the fun begins.

The game is played from two perspectives: third person, where the characters follow the lead character single file, and first person, usually reserved for exploring large cities or dungeons. Both views use the mouse for control, and although it would have been nice to incorporate more intuitive keyboard control in the first-person perspective sequences (perhaps based on a Doom or Duke Nukem model) it works well. You can have up to six members in your party, and there are several different forms of magic for the players who like to experiment. Turn-based combat is resolved on a grid. Tasks are assigned to each character, the round of battle is resolved, and so on until the battle ends. Sounds fairly standard on paper, but it's a lot more refreshing than, say, Battle at Krondor, with quite a bit of flexibility, and playing it on a grid introduces an almost chess-like element of strategy.

The graphics are aren't too sophisticated, although they're certainly colorful and clear, and since the visuals aren't that demanding, it plays well even on slower machines. The story is complex, with lots of twists and turns. On the whole, the game is well thought-

out and definitely worth checking out, especially in the RPG drought of late.

**Rating: ★★★**



The most common view is the top-down perspective, where the characters follow the mouse when you hold down the mouse button. RPG fans will have no problem with Albion's interface



Investigate this sofa factory to expose the Norm Police's secret

compliant populace. Such is the setting for Normality, a new graphic adventure from Gremlin.

You play the role of Kent, an obnoxious "grunge" character with a goatee, baggy shorts, and a voice left over from the Bill & Ted films. And although the character may be annoying, some of the things he says are pretty funny. Well-rendered cut /scenes, which are at least brief and relevant to the action, also appear at intervals, helping to flesh out the character.

Most of Normality's action takes place in a first-person, true 3D world with complete freedom of movement which is something

of a departure for graphic adventures. But unlike Under a Killing Moon where the character moved like a drunken sailor, looking around and moving in Normality is as smooth as in Doom, and the texture maps are of about the same quality.

But the drawback with Normality's environment is that as much as you can run around and explore, almost nothing happens. Other characters simply stand in their places and wait for you to click on them so you can climb up the dialogue tree. A better idea would have been to make the environment truly interactive or to at least include some roving Norm Police patrols to hide from. However, this is a graphic adventure, 3D Doom-style movement notwithstanding, and so this static world fits into the structure of other 2D entries in the genre — it's just odd to see it in a free 3D context.

The puzzles are logical and not absurdly difficult and involve the common-sense use of inventory objects. Veteran graphic adventurers are likely to find things too easy, though. In short, Normality is a well-

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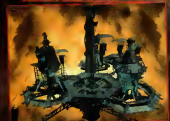
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PC

# ZPLENDID



Tanks and talkative robots clash in *Z*, an engaging and funny new strategy game from Virgin and the Bitmap Bros.

## Z

**Developer:** Bitmap Brothers  
**Publisher:** Virgin

*Z* is a real-time strategy game, like *Command & Conquer* or *WarCraft II*, but with enough differences to set it apart. In an interesting twist, there are no resources to manage. Instead, there are a dozen or so territories on each map you must capture. The strategy is simple: the more territory a player holds, the more units can be cranked out in each territory's factories. How fast a player can react to a rapidly changing situation while still retaining the semblance of an overall plan, rather than carefully managing commodities, is what gives the game its appeal — action, not economics.

The AI in *Z* is also commendable — units left idle will automatically pick up flags, vehicles, and extra grenades in their vicinity. Another excellent feature is the ability to click directly on alert messages — soldiers yelling or factories completing equipment — and instantly snap to the appropriate spot. And the soldiers do yell, a lot, both in combat and outscenes, even screaming obscenities at you as you lose.

There are five different terrain types to fight in, from deserts to jungles, but only about 20 missions. This is way too few and one of the game's only drawbacks. You can finish *Z* in about half the time it took you to finish playing one side of *Command & Conquer* or *WarCraft II*, and unlike these other games, *Z* has only one side to play: both your side and the opposition use the same units.

On the other hand, as with other real-time wargames, multiplayer options greatly enhance the game. Up to four players can compete on the same map, making for a very fast-paced, back-and-forth battle, very different in feel from *C&C* and *Warcraft II*. Since the multiplayer aspect is such a blast, and the length of the games are relatively short, *Z* is a prime candidate for the burgeoning online gaming services.

Although it's in no danger of knocking either *C&C* or *WarCraft II* from the real-time strategy throne, *Z* is a very good, original game that's enjoyable in its own right.

**Rating:** ★★★★★

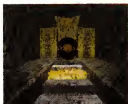
executed, amusing graphic adventure, which, while not breaking any new ground — despite a new twist on movement, is at least mildly fun and entertaining.

**Rating:** ★★★

## Qin: Tomb of the Middle Kingdom

**Publisher:** Learn Technologies  
**Developer:** Learn Technologies

We've seen it all before: Thrust into a photo-realistic world, the player wanders through high-resolution artwork, solving puzzles. *Myst* has procreated once again, asexually budding off another offspring with little more interest than the others, although at least in *Qin* you can learn a few things. As an archeologist sent to uncover the tomb of the first Chinese Emperor, not only do players get to look at the pretty pictures but also apply history to the puzzles they have to solve. So in order to get very far, get used to reading the online encyclopedia — a lot. It's not so bad for those into ancient Chinese mythology, but if you're looking for an actual game to play, it's damn dull stuff.



The pictures are nice, and some of the puzzles are tricky, but *Qin* isn't much of a game

Although *Qin* might draw in a few truly susceptible people or brain-damaged *Myst* freaks, most gamers will find it an incredible bore within minutes, pretty pictures or no.

**Rating:** ★

## Shell Shock

**Publisher:** Eidos Interactive

**Developer:** Core Design

Starting out as a new recruit for "De Wardenz," an elite commando group, this game is about how well you can handle a tank in the heat of battle. In other words, aside from some rendered cutscenes and some

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communication with your fellow commandos, *Shell Shock* is a new and improved *Battle Tank*.

To be fair, the game has been ported from consoles, which tend to favor immediate, "jump into it" action, and the battle engine



**Shell Shock's graphics aren't that great, but at least it runs well on slow computers**

works well, even on slower computers. The graphics aren't much to talk about, but that's not always a bad thing in a game like this. Although the keys are configurable, it's awkward to set things up exactly right, so turning the turret of the tank while driving isn't exactly simple.

There's also an autopilot to help out when things get tight.

But overall, this game shows its console roots by focusing exclusively on riding around and blowing up other tanks. It does have an intriguing storyline, and the characters are well fleshed out and entertaining, but it's just not enough for the sophisticated gamer to come back for more. However, on the pure action level, this might whet some appetites. It's not a hit, but it might be enough to entertain you as long as it's purchased in the ever-helpful bargain bin.

Rating: ★★

## MacIntosh

### Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures

Publisher: LucasArts

Developer: LucasArts

The idea for this game is excellent: graphic adventures that can be solved in under an hour. By using a random scenario generator, billions of possible game combinations can be achieved. Unfortunately, this lends itself to pretty repetitive gameplay — "Indy, go get that AMAZONIAN CODEC back from the Nazis!" — and fairly simplistic puzzles. The whole game involves fighting past (killing) Nazis or super stereotypical (don't say racist) depictions of Mexicans and Indians to get some object which you need to get past some barrier — "I'm sorry, Jones, you



**Desktop Adventures ain't long or good-looking, but it is cheap**

cannot cross this bridge 'til you bring me an INCAN POT." And then, of course, beyond this there lies some other object needed to get past another barrier and so on until you recover the main object, at which point the game ends. Oh yeah, there are also some mazes and "push things together" puzzles too. Oh, and the game is set on a grid, and you can't shoot diagonally, although your enemies can. Which sucks.

All this said, however, the game only costs around 12 bucks and if you don't expect too much, it is pretty fun. The underlying idea is sound, and if you don't mind repetition, check it out.

Rating: ★★★

## Genesis

### NHL '97

Publisher: EA Sports

Developer: High Score

Productions

The most successful and best-selling hockey series continues to roll on with a '97 edition, its sixth — count 'em, sixth — incarnation on the Genesis. The graphics and engine are almost identical to last year's game, but some of the bugs of '96 have been cleaned up. The most notable differences from '96 are the signature moves, the updated



**Look familiar? The one-timers, the crushing checks, and the fights are all back**

players, and the improved AI. Now each team has one player who has a signature deke or shot instead of the standard spin-O-rama. Not a significant change, but it does add to the two-player game. The improved AI makes your automatic one-timers in the corner tougher to pull off, but without a doubt, after a couple of weeks experienced players should find new ways to score at will.

Even with all the enhancements this game has undergone on 32-bit systems, the feel of a humble Genesis pad controlling all-out NHL action is unsurpassed. Moves like racing into the corner and laying off a pass in front of the crease or upending a speedy center at the blue line are as natural as breathing to any true fan of the series, and it's this familiarity that makes NHL '97 so playable. It just keeps getting better, no matter what system it's on.

If you know the NHL series, then you know exactly what to expect from NHL '97. This is a classic arcade hockey game with addictive gameplay, real teams, and everything else a hockey fan could want from a videogame.

Rating: ★★★★★

## SORRY!

No new games were made available for review this month on the following systems

Nintendo 64

Jaguar

Virtual Boy

Neo-Geo

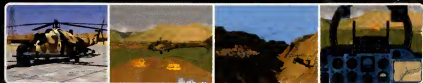
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# Next Generation gamers guide

Every new "next-generation" game, rated for your purusal

The following list is a round-up of all the final review scores given to next generation console games. Titles with the suffix (Japan) are not available in the U.S. Happy hunting...

TITLE	PUBLISHER	NG RATING
<b>Nintendo 64</b>		
Super Mario 64	Nintendo	*****
Pilot Wings	Nintendo	*****

## PlayStation

Addict Power Soccer	Psygnosis	***
Agile Warrior	Virgin	**
Alien Trilogy	Acclaim	****
A-Train	SCE	****
Aquasoft's Holiday (Japan)	Acclaim	****
Art: The Last (Japan)	SCE	****
Battle Arena Toshinden	SCE	****
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	SCE	****
Beyond the Beyond	SCE	**
Black Down	Virgin	****
Bugsy Dead 6	Sony	***
Bottom of the North	Konami	****
Boxer's Road (Japan)	New Corp	****
Cosmic Race (Japan)	Neorex	*
Crash Bandicoot	SCE	***
Crime Crackers (Japan)	Sony Entertainment	**
Crocom	Victo	**
Cybera	Interplay	***
Cyberjudo	Mindscape	***
Cyber Steel	Namco	**
CyberWar (Japan)	Coco Nuts	**
Deflem 5	Data East	****
Dark Stalkers	Cygnus	***
Descent	Interplay	****
Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	****
Die Hard Trilogy	Fox Interactive	****
Doom	Williams	****
Dragon Ball Z (Japan)	Bandai	**
Fede to Black	Electronic Arts	****
Gex	Crysal Dynamics	****
Goal Storm	Konami	****
Gradius	Konami	****
Guard's Heaven (Japan)	Media-Vison	****
Gunsling	Microprose	**
Hardball 5	Accolade	**
In the Hunt	Xing	*
In the Zone	Konami	***
Jumping Flash!	SCE	*****
Jumping Flash! 2	Sony	*****
Jupiter Strike	Acclaim	*
Katak The DNA Imperative	SME	***
Katak The Blood 2	SME	**
Killing Time	Naxos Soft	*
Krazy Field	Acclaim	****
Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	****
Loaded	Interplay	****
Master Justice (Japan)	Sales	**
Master Justice (Japan)	Bandai	**
Master Kombat 3	Publisher	***
Master Kombat GP (Japan)	SCE	***
Namco Museum vol. 1	Namco	****
NBA Jam Tournament Ed	Acclaim	****
NBA Live '96	Electronic Arts	****
NBA Shoot Out	Sony Interactive	****
NFL Gamedy	Sony Interactive	*****

TITLE	PUBLISHER	NG RATING	TITLE	PUBLISHER	NG RATING
NHL Face Off	Sony Interactive	*****	Gotha (Japan)	Sega	***
Olympic Soccer	U.S. Gold	***	Guard on Heaven (Japan)	Sega	***
PGA Tour Invitational '96	Electronic Arts	***	Hang-On GP '95	Sega	***
Pokémon	SCE	**	Hi-Octane	EA	**
Po'ol	Accolade	****	High Velocity	Atlas	***
Power Soccer 3-D Tennis	Ocean	***	Iron Storm	Working Designs	****
Power Baseball (Japan)	Konami	*	Johnny Bazookastone	U.S. Gold	****
Project Horned Owl	Sony	***	Last Gladiators (Japan)	Kaze Co	****
Project Overkill	Konami	****	Legend of Oasis	Sega	****
Raiden	Sellu	**	Loaded	Interplay	***
Rayman	Ubisoft	****	Manon of Hidden Souls	Sega	***
Return Fire	Time Warner Int.	****	Mortal Kombat II	Acclaim	***
Resident Evil	Capcom	*****	Myst	SunSoft	***
Ridge Racer	Namco	****	NHL All-Star Hockey '96	Sega	**
Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	**	NHL Powerplay '96	Virgin Interactive	*****
Road Rash	Electronic Arts	***	Night Warriors	Capcom	***
Robo-Pit	Kuqi	***	Nights	Sega	*****
Romance of the 3 King IV	U.S. Gold	****	Off-World Interceptor	Crystal Dynamics	***
Shellock	Electronic Arts	**	Panzer Dragoon	Sega	****
Shockwave Assault	Aemic	***	Panzer Dragoon II Zwei	Sega	****
Sidewinder	Victo	****	Pibble Beach Golf Links	Sega	***
Sliverline	Victo	****	Ridgid Sags (Japan)	Sega	***
Slime City 2000	Maxis	***	Robo-Pit	Kotopell	***
Slam 'n' Jam	Crystal Dynamics	****	Quarterback Attack	Digital Pictures	***
Space Griffon	Asus	**	Satan Bomboman	Hudson (Japan)	****
Space Hulk	Electronic Arts	***	Sage Rally Championship	Sega	*****
Tekken	Namco	****	Shellock	U.S. Gold	***
Tekken 2	Namco	*****	Shindo Legends	Sega	***
Tokyo Highway Battle	Jaleco	***	Shining Force	Working Designs	***
Top Gun	Spectrum Holographics	**	Shining Wisdom	Working Designs	***
Touti Eclips Turbo	Crysal Dynamics	**	Sm-City	Minds	***
Touhou Retrospect (Japan)	SE	****	Skeleton Warriors	Playmates	***
Twisted Metal	Time	****	SteamGear Mash	Takara (Japan)	***
Vampire	Electronic Arts	*	Street Fighter The Movie	Acclaim	***
Warhawk	Sony Interactive	****	Striker	Acclaim	*
Wipeout	Psygnosis	*****	Tania (Japan)	Tengen	**
Worms	Ocean of America	****	Tenri Plus	Jaleco	***
WWF Wrestlemania	Acclaim	****	Theme Park	Electronic Arts	***
X-Com UFO Defense	Microprose	*****	Three Dirty Dwarves	Sega	***
Zoo Divide	Zoom	***	ThunderStrike 2	U.S. Gold	***

## Saturn

Alen Trilogy	Acclaim	***	Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3	Williams	**
Alen in the Dark	T-HQ	***	Virtus Cup	Sega	****
Assault	Sega	***	Virtus Fighter	Sega	****
Battle Arena Tacti' Remix	Sega	***	Virtus Fighter Kids	Sega	****
Battle Remaster (Japan)	Naxos Soft	**	Virtus Fighter Remix	Sega	*****
Blackfish	Sega	***	Virtus Fighter 2	Sega	*****
Bug!	Sega	***	Virtus Racing	Time Warner	***
Clockwork Knight	Sega	***	Virtus Hydlide	Atlas	**
Clockwork Knight 2 (Japan)	Sega	***	Virtus Open Tennis	Acclaim	***
Congo the Mave	Sega	**	Virtus Valleyball (Japan)	Imagines	*
Cyberstep	Mindscape	***	Wicked 18	Victo	***
D	Acclaim	***	Wing Arms	Sega	***
Dark Legends (Japan)	Data East	**	Wipeout	Sega	****
Daytona USA	Sega	****	World Cup Golf Pro Edition	U.S. Gold	***
Deadlands (Japan)	Sega	***	World Series Baseball	Sega	****
Decadent	Sega	****	Worldwide Soccer	Sega	***
Double Switch	Digital Pictures	**	Worms	Ocean of America	****
Earthworm Jim 2	Playmates	**	X-Men: Gift of the Atom	Capcom	***
FIFA Soccer	Electronic Arts	*****			
F-1 Live Information	Sega	***			
Frosty Thomas Baseball	Acclaim	***			
Galactic Attack	Acclaim	***			
Gekkanzen-Tokio (Japan)	Sega-Japan	***			
Ghen War	Sega	***			
Golden Axe: The Duel	Sega	***			

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- \*\*\*\* Excellent
- \*\*\* Good
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# Letters

## Swing to the write

**E**ugene Jarvis comes across as nothing short of brilliant in **NG 21's** interview. It's so very surprising that a man with such insight had anything to do with the mediocrity that is *Cruis'n USA*.

**Camp Murphy**  
[lumbia@sprynet.com](mailto:lumbia@sprynet.com)

**E**ugene Jarvis says that gamers are not interested in realism and 3D games because reality stinks. So how does he explain the success of *Daytona USA*, *Sega Rally*, or *Virtua Fighter 2*?

**ZSWP31B@prodigy.com**

Eugene didn't argue that all 3D games are bad, but rather that putting a player into a 3D world doesn't automatically make a great game. And you know what? We agree with him.

**I** feel that the entire gaming world has lost touch with what it really means to be a gamer. I have found myself longing more and more for the days of old, namely the golden age of gaming, the 8-bit era. A time when all games had going for them was gameplay, and the only reason to play was for fun.

This is why **NG 20's** interview with Brian Moriarty bothered me. I don't want games to make an important social impact. I don't want to be the hands of an abortion doctor or the person who pulls the lever for the gas chamber. I don't want the medium to be one where important changes happen. If I want real life, I'll step out my front door.

This type of stuff is not what

gaming is about. Gaming should be about enjoying yourself, relaxing, and having a good time.

**Kazin@aol.com**

But so far all gaming is simply about enjoying yourself. Isn't there room for a small genre of games that deal with bigger issues and offer a more substantial intellectual challenge?

**I**d Software only does two things: they can create 3D engines and they can create hype. They do not know how to make a "game." There is no evolving storyline integrated into any 1d game, including *Quake*. There is no ultimate goal to accomplish other than "finding the exit" on every level. Thus, there is no sense of progression.



Is *Quake* really a step forward or just the same old game?

In fact 1d games have the game-design sophistication of *Space Invaders*. All they do is put flash into crap, and because everyone remembered *Doom* it turns into something good that sells like crazy.

**NG** simply buys into this hype. In a previous issue you

gave *Terminator: Future Shock* a two-star rating. Yet, TFS has an excellent evolving storyline, varying objectives, and an ultimate goal — to save humankind from SkyNet. It also has every single feature of *Quake's* 3D Engine, including true floors above floors, slanted walls, polygonal enemies, lighting — heck it even runs nicely on a 486 (*Quake* doesn't). It also pioneered the Mouse Aiming concept which *Duke* incorporated (and were kind enough to acknowledge it) as well as *Quake* (who renamed it "mlook" and now the average American gamer credits 1d software for it). There are also levels in which players can drive a jeep or an HK.

Two-Stars huh? *Quake* is inferior to TFS in all aspects.

**Terry Lin**  
[tlm@cyberl.com](mailto:tlm@cyberl.com)

Many cars for under \$15,000 have electric windows, sun roofs, leather upholstery, and all manner of sophisticated-sounding gadgets. But all this doesn't make such a car equal to a \$100,000 Ferrari or Porsche. And saying that a game is bad because it has no evolving storyline is bogus. Do you really play a game just for the story? If so, you're no gamer.

**D**oom was transcendental, revolutionary, primal, and subversive. *Quake* is not. Am I the only one who will come out and say this? The emperor has no clothes, folks.

**John Weston**  
[frisco@earthlink.net](mailto:frisco@earthlink.net)

Without wishing to open a can

of worms, what does everyone else think? Obviously, it would be impossible for *Quake* to live up to the hype, but is it a better game than *Doom*?

**I**n **NG 19's** Getting Connected article the author states that "it wasn't until late 1994, with the introduction of Catapult's XBand... that a console modem was introduced in the U.S."

Not true. There was a service called *Gameline* back in 1984 which used a Master Module by Control Video Corp that was actually a 300-baud modem that allowed users to download Atari 2600 games. Before *Gameline* died in the crash, they were testing email and stocklines and also running high score contests.

**Russ Perry Jr**  
[slapdash@athenet.net](mailto:slapdash@athenet.net)

Thanks. The author has been suspended from the ceiling with telephone cable.

**I**n **NG 21** I came across a letter from Sebastian Ulynn who said that a souped-up PC is the best game machine around. You guys said that a PC costs too much for most people, which is true, and that you can't play PC games from your couch.

Recently, I bought a Gateway 2000 Destination, which can be used from the couch, since it uses a TV and IR remotes. How do you think this changes the state of PC gaming?

**Terry & Mary Ellen Foust**  
[75630.3235@compuserve.com](mailto:75630.3235@compuserve.com)

Gateway's initiative certainly

# corresponding

helps the PC's cause, but the cost issue remains a problem.

**I**n the article entitled "Nintendo, Sega, & Sony Under One Roof in NG 20, the big three discussed 'Topic 3: Nintendo 64.' Unsurprisingly, Sega & Sony blasted and bemoaned the Nintendo 64's cartridge format. The gist of their argument seems to be that cartridges are less of a financial risk than CDs, and third-party companies are deathly afraid of going back to cartridges. Howard Lincoln responds that any third-party company that has made a quality game on a Nintendo machine has made a lot of money. The inference is that only the big, successful companies will make games for the system.

This brings me to my point: I'm glad that third-party publishers won't be making games for the Nintendo 64, and that there won't be all the second-rate software that cluttered the 16-bit market.

Dan Gonzalez  
elendil@surfnetinc.com

Your point is valid, but you neglect to mention the flip side of the coin. Often the best games come from the small, new companies, and large successful game publishers are more likely to stick to formulaic, "safe" games — instead of breaking new ground.

**A**fter reading Sony, Sega, and Nintendo trying to out-soundbite each other in NG 20 while talking about CDs versus cartridges, it occurs to me that by emphasizing the low production costs of CD-ROMs, Sega and Sony merely illustrated to me how much they are willing to screw the consumer.

Sega and Sony don't have to charge anywhere near what they do in order to make a decent profit on games.

Andy Leicher  
L.A.

You raise an interesting point, and you can expect to see

PlayStation and Saturn software dropping in price if and when Nintendo 64 starts to seriously threaten them.

**I**'m writing in response to Thearrel W. McKinney Jr.'s letter in NG 20 in which he claimed that he had "cracked the puzzle behind Sony's mysterious 'Enos Lives' ads" using the biblical character Enos and PlayStation's launch date on September 12.

Next Generation agreed that his analysis was "fascinating" except, of course, that PlayStation was released on September 9.

I, too, thought it was fascinating, until I looked up Genesis 5:6 and found that the character that Mr. McKinney refers to is actually Enosh, not Enos. There's an extra H in the name. So you were close, Thearrel, but no cigar.

XbandEG15@aol.com

And for one glorious minute, we thought we had it.

**I** read Timothy Kish's letter in NG 21 concerning swearing in videogames. I agree and disagree with him in this way: Language, Nudity, Violence, Humor, Music, Story, Cuteness, and so on, are all tools of the videogame trade — but only if they are used appropriately, and where it makes most sense. Then it only adds to the game.

I agree that Mega Man yelling "Damn" could be seen as not being appropriate, because it's a platform game with a "cutsey" character in it. But if you're in another, more adult game environment, and you find that, say, a zombie has eaten your girlfriend, "Oh dear" or "What a shame!" would seem equally inappropriate, no?

Jack Caliber  
MarvellT2@aol.com

Agreed.

**I**n an attempt to avoid sounding like a broken record, I'll drop my previous topics and focus on

some other things that have been bugging me lately.

1) Sequels. Is it just me or are sequels coming out less than a year apart these days? I mean it's ridiculous. I remember back in the old days a new Mario game was such a big thing because they came out only every few years. Nowadays, often (but not always) there's little but a graphical upgrade. 2) 2D fighters will never die, because 3D fighters (even VF2) seem slow and clunky in comparison. It amazes me how a few years ago a 2D fighting game would get a lower rating because it had no turbo mode, yet nowadays games that respond painfully slow (due to the implementation of "realistic" motion capture) get five stars! 3) People say that Sega and Sony are targeting a more "mature" audience, and that Sony's registration cards reveal that the average PlayStation user is 24 years old. We all know that age is not a good judge of maturity. If it were, then I (a 20 year old) would be playing Tekken (a "sophisticated" fighting game) instead of Yoshi's Island.

Crystal Walters  
Whisp76@aol.com

It's good to have you back, Crystal! Actually, when Sony talks about the average age of PlayStation users it's important



One of the best games ever, but is this the real Asteroids?

to notice that the company still cites "the first batch of returned registration cards" as the source of its data. Of course, since the original launch, the price of PlayStation has dropped

drastically, and the average user age has fallen also. Sony probably won't acknowledge this, but the average PlayStation buyer today is probably less than 18 years of age.

**I** still have a great-working 8-bit NES that is used by my youngest son. Unfortunately, I can't find any new games for him. Do you know of any companies that still sell regular 8-bit Nintendo games? Oh, and since I am stationed in Korea with the USAF, could you confine your response to companies that do business via mail order?

MSgt Marty Caudle  
Osan Air Base, Korea  
caudlem@emh.osan.af.mil

Can anyone help this guy out?

**H**owdy! I was slightly miffed to read the complaints made by a few women in NG 20. I find using sex in advertising to be an inoffensive and highly effective form of advertising. When I see a semi-naked picture of a man or woman in a magazine, I feel excitement in a way that is very enjoyable. I admire their bodies.

Simply put, the vast majority of people playing videogames are male youths. Thus, advertisers target them. What's the best way to target them? Semi-nude pics of bodies and blood! The whole reason I started playing K12 was because of the female characters and their great butts. Sex works! You could give a game a terrible review, but as long as it's filled with sex, young males would buy it like crazy. I would.

david@branson.org

You're a brave man, David. But we respect your honesty.

**Y**ou've finally crossed the line this time! Using an imitation Asteroids screen shot on page 1 of NG 21. Sacrilege!

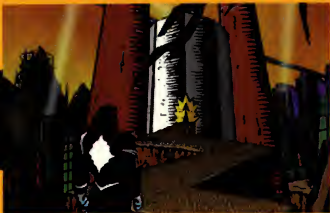
Timothy Wojnar  
tim@marinar.com

Guilty as charged.

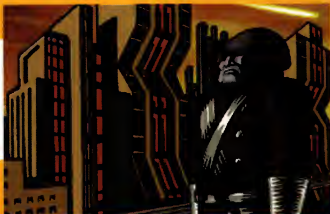
ng



THE INSPIRATION  
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THE INSPIRATION BEHIND  
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EVER PLAYED."

**Rick Stetta**  
Five Time World  
Pinball Champion



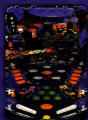
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Next Month

# THE MAIN EVENT



VS



VS



## Nintendo 64 VS Sega Saturn VS PlayStation

The Miyamoto Mawler (backed up by the ever-faithful Lincoln Lynch-Mob) returns to champion the world's first true 64-bit game console. But will its controversial use of cartridges be its downfall or a powerful weapon?

With Tom Kalinske missing, Sonic Extreme on the injury list and still no sign of Virtua Fighter 3 as a back-up, can the Sega Saturn camp come out fighting? Or is it all over by a technical knockout before round one?

The early favorite is still the number-one contender, but does PlayStation have the stamina to go the distance? Looking for a decisive early victory, the Ken Kutagari Krusher is facing its toughest opponent yet.

Which videogame system should *you* buy? Which console does Next Generation recommend? Next month, the gloves come off in the ultimate gaming grudge match: **Nintendo 64** versus **Sega Saturn** versus **PlayStation**. It's controversial, it's something only Next Generation dares to do, and it's happening next month.

# NOV. 19th 1996

**Next Generation #24**  
on sale November 19, 1996.

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# N64™ LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, START YOUR EYEBALLS



SO MANY



If you're going to invest your hard-earned (or mooched) cash in a video game system, you want to be sure you can play plenty of great games on it. Not an issue. There are over 50 titles in development for N64 covering all gaming categories, from action to role-playing, sports, fighting, simulation, puzzles, you name it. Furthermore, these are not titles that will wind up in the bargain bin after a month, because

Nintendo and the exclusive N64 Dream Team developers are dedicated to producing cutting-edge software that takes full advantage of the Nintendo 64's incredible technology. A few of the first wave of titles include

Super Mario 64™  
PilotWings 64™  
Wave Race 64™  
Killer Instinct® Gold,

The waiting is over. Nintendo 64® is finally here, on the shelf, waiting for you to snatch it up. But what's the big deal, you're probably asking yourself. It took long enough. Was the wait worth it? You bet, and here's why.

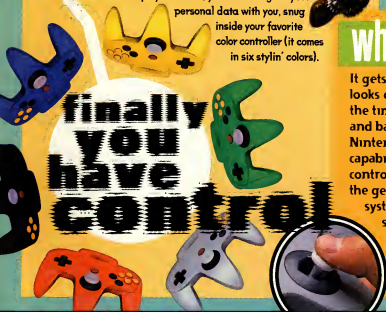
The Nintendo 64 controller is the most revolutionary video game interaction device ever. It all starts with the analog Control Stick. Unlike the traditional all-or-nothing digital Control Pad (it's got one of those too), the analog Control Stick is sensitive to even the slightest movement. Move it a little to make Mario tiptoe. Crank on it and watch him take off in a full-tilt sprint. Best of all, the Control Stick gives you 360 degrees of control. The three grips on the controller let you hold the controller three different ways, depending on what works best for the game you are playing. For saving your records and high scores, the controller has a handy slot for your personal Memory Pak. Now when you go to your friend's house for some multi-player action, you can bring all your

personal data with you, snug inside your favorite color controller (it comes in six stylin' colors).

finally  
you  
have  
control

## what's up our sleeve.

It gets better. Most new gaming technology looks cool when it first comes out, but by the time you get it home, something bigger and badder is on the way. Fortunately, the Nintendo 64 was designed with maximum capability for future upgrades in mind. Four controller ports mean four-player gaming from the get-go. Expansion ports allow for more system RAM and new peripherals (can you say readable-writable storage media?). The bottom line: The Nintendo 64 is currently the most advanced video game system ever, and it is the only system that is designed to change with technology.







SUDDENLY,  
THINGS  
ARE  
GETTING  
PERSONAL.



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